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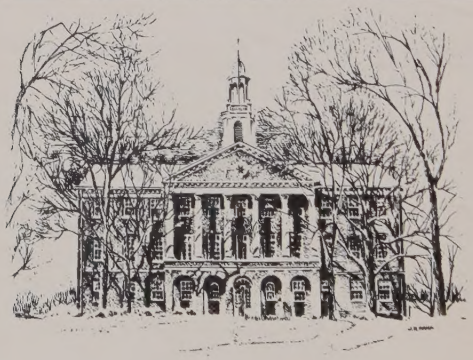

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THE EARLY LIFE OF OUR LORD

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THE EARLY LIFE OF OUR LORD

BY THE

REV. J. BROUGH, M.A.

CHAPLAIN TO THE FORCES

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JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

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PREFACE

This book is an attempt to realise the surroundings in which the child of Mary grew to be the man Christ Jesus, in order the better to understand His person and His work.

It used to be said that Providence has drawn a veil over our Lord's earlier years. But what man can know, God has not meant to hide. If there is little said by the Evangelists, it may well be because their business was to tell of what in their Master marked Him off from other men, and not to describe details of life which were common to Him and everyone else at the time. We, of another race and a later age, have to go back, by inquiry and imagination, into the past, if we are to fill in the picture which they barely sketched.

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Such works as contain matter related to our subject, either do not deal with it in the biographical spirit, or have too little of this and too much of other things to be read for this special purpose. They are either treatises on Jewish matters, or complete Lives, or sermons. It is hoped that the present volume may be full enough to serve as a handbook for the teacher of religion, and simple enough to be suitable also for the learner.

The main sources of knowledge are: the Hebrew Scriptures, the Gospels, the works of Josephus, and the Talmuds; and the present condition of the Holy Land.

For though the direct notices of the childhood of Jesus are scanty, they are suggestive, while everything is valuable that tells us what were the thoughts and ways of the people among whom He was brought up; and the records of His short and busy public career throw light back upon His earlier experiences.

What our inquiries can yield us is not,

as are those records, certain truth, but reasonable probability.

It will be understood that we are considering, throughout, His development as man only, without prejudice to the perfection of His nature and powers as God. The knowledge of which we speak is a human knowledge, different in source and form and sphere from the divine knowledge, co-existing with it, and, if not unaffected, yet not ordinarily superseded, by it.

A list is appended p. [11] of some of the more useful modern books which bear upon the subject.

J. B.

September, 1897.

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THE

EARLY LIFE OF OUR LORD

CHAPTER I

BIRTH AND INFANCY

It was in the stable of an inn at Bethlehem that Jesus was born. Mary, and Joseph her husband, had left the village of Nazareth, which was their home, and journeyed four days southwards to where, among rich fields and olive-trees and vineyards, the hill of Bethlehem stood; he, because it was his native city, and hither must he come to be enrolled in the census which, in obedience to the general 'decree of Cæsar Augustus,' Herod had directed to be made; and she with him, because perhaps they thought it would be happier now to change their place

of abode and settle in 'his own city.' When they arrived there, near the close of a short winter day, the little town was already crowded with those who had come on the same errand, to be registered, and the leewans (raised recesses) of the khan were occupied, and the courtyard where the cattle were tied was the only lodging they could get. Tradition places this khan in a cave. And here, at some time during their stay, the Virgin 'brought forth her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger.'[1]

Usually a new-born child was bathed and rubbed with salt to harden the skin, and then wrapped in calico bandages about three yards long and six inches wide. St. Luke's words seem to imply that whatever was done now, Mary had to do it herself, without the help or sympathy of neighbour or of nurse. The child would not be unnecessarily exposed: the Jews were shocked at that practice.

Before the night was gone some shepherds came in, and, finding Mary and

[1] Luke 2, 7.

Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger, began to tell how, watching their flocks out upon the hills, they had seen the 'glory of the Lord' and heard the voice of an 'angel' announcing to them that this day, in the city of David, was born a Saviour, the anointed Lord, and how, suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.' And then they went away, glorifying God; and Mary kept these sayings, and pondered them in her heart.

On the eighth day from His birth He would be circumcised. Every boy in Israel was by this rite dedicated to God, and always on this day.

He who performed the rite said: 'Blessed be the Lord our God, who hath sanctified us with His precepts and hath given us circumcision.' The father responded: 'Who hath sanctified us with His precepts, and granted to us to introduce our child into the alliance of Abraham our father.' Now, too, the name was given; for God, it was said, changed Abraham's and Sarah's names at the same time that He instituted circum-

cision. Usually one of the parents' names was chosen; but the angel Gabriel had announced to Mary, 'Thou shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus.' [1] It was the name of the warrior who led Israel into the promised land, of the High Priest who brought them home from Babylon, and of many hundred others unknown to fame. Henceforth it was to be the name above every name, at which every knee should bow. So was Jesus admitted in due form into the congregation of Israel, and made one of Jehovah's people.

The ceremony over, what friends were present sat down to a repast.

For forty days after the birth of a son, or sixty-six after the birth of a daughter, the Jewish mother remained at home, and was not allowed to touch any sacred thing, or to take any part in social life. Then she had to go to the Temple, partly to thank God for her safety, as now in Christian lands women come to be churched, but specially to receive the legal rite of purification. So, her forty days expired, Mary took her way to

[1] Luke 1, 31.

Episcopalian

Jerusalem. She would ride on an ox or ass, that she might not by any chance be defiled, say by passing over a grave on the road. Only a few miles, and she was passing through the narrow streets of the lower town, and across the bridge over the valley, to Mount Moriah and the Golden Gate, and into the Court of the Women. There, under the great porch of the Nicanor Gate, which led into the Court of the Israelites, were other women waiting till the morning incense had been offered, and the nine blasts of the trumpets had sounded the signal for morning prayer. Soon the gate opened, and Levites came out and took their offerings, to be burned on the altar in the Court of the Priests after the morning sacrifice. A lamb was the proper offering for those who could afford it; but the poor brought a pair of doves or two young pigeons, just purchased from an official dealer. That Joseph and Mary, though of good family—he, at least, descended from King David, and she related to the priestly caste—were in a humble position, is made certain to us by the fact that on this occasion the offering they

brought was that of the poor. The women, while the sacrifice was being offered within, remained outside, giving thanks to God for their recovery, and by-and-by a priest came and sprinkled them with some of the blood and pronounced them clean.

But there was another purpose to be served by this visit of Mary's to the Temple. The eldest son of a family had in the patriarchal age been the assistant of the father in his priestly capacity. When the tribe of Levi was set apart to act as priests for the whole nation, the first-born was still regarded as sacred to God, and had to be presented before Him, and then bought back by a money payment. The Rabbis qualified the original law of Moses so far as that no child should be presented that had any physical blemish. And so we know that Jesus, being thus brought and presented, was a sound and whole and healthy child, the 'perfect man' that our Creeds declare Him. What were the details of the ceremony then we do not know. What happens now among the stricter Jews is this: On the thirty-first day after birth the first-born is laid on a table before a Rabbi, with a small sum of

money, about ten or twenty shillings. 'Which would you rather do,' says the Rabbi, 'give up your first-born, who is the first child of his mother, to Jehovah, or redeem him for five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which is five gera?' The father answers that he wishes to redeem the child. He hands the money to the Rabbi, praising God in a set form of words. The Rabbi passes the coin round the child's head with one hand, and laying the other on his brow, says: 'This (child) is instead of this (money), and this (money) instead of this (child); may this child be brought to life, to the law, and to the fear of heaven; and as he has been brought to be ransomed, so may he enter into the law and good deeds.' Then, with both hands on the child's head, he pronounces words of blessing, and the rite is ended.

This custom of to-day may give us some idea of what took place nineteen hundred years ago, when Joseph and Mary at the Nicanor Gate presented and redeemed their first-born son.

On this same morning, also, in the Temple court, two other incidents occurred

of which the Evangelists make special note. An old man, Simeon by name, 'righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel,' and expecting before he died to see the Anointed One of the Lord, had come 'by the Spirit' into the Temple, and, as Mary stood presenting her child, knew somehow that this was He for whom he hoped. He took the child in his arms and burst into the impassioned thanksgiving which we use daily in our Evening Prayer:—

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people,
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

And as Joseph and Mary stood amazed at his words, he turned to them and gave them his blessing, and told Mary that her child would be the occasion 'for the falling and rising up of many in Israel' (we know now how the acceptance or rejection of Jesus, as the revelation of God, proved to be the test of a good or an evil heart, the earnest of spiritual life or death), 'and for

a sign which is spoken against' (all down the ages since have there been those who have denied that that human life was the true setting forth of the divine will). 'Yea, and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul' (the hatred and persecution which Jesus met with, the doubt in her own mind as to His mission, and then His shame and death, must have been to the mother's heart worse than any wound of Thracian lance), 'that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed' (the light of Jesus' life and words exposed the hidden ugliness of hypocrisy and formalism).

So clearly did the venerable saint foresee the inevitable earthly sorrow, and the assured spiritual light and salvation, that were to be the portion both of Christ Himself and of His Church.

And now an aged woman approaches. It is Anna the prophetess, well known here in the Temple courts, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. A wife long ago, for seven happy years, she has remained a widow since, faithful to her husband's memory. Now she is eighty-four, and so absorbed in religious duties that, as St.

Luke puts it, she 'departed not from the Temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day.' Not that she actually lived in the Temple—no one did so; but that she was, so to speak, always there. She comes up at this moment and sees the child, and she too gives thanks to God, and goes on to tell of Him to all those who, like herself, were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Such was the reception of the child Jesus by a typical man of earnest purpose and a woman of religious feeling.

It must have been an exciting day for Mary and her husband, and they would have much to think about as they made their way back in the evening to the quiet village of Bethlehem.

One day they had some unusual visitors. In countries east of Palestine there existed at this time a religious caste called Magi, followers of Zoroaster, students of the heavens. A group of them arrived in Jerusalem saying that they had observed the rising of a new star, which they believed to be connected with the birth of the Jewish Messiah King. 'Where is He?' they asked,

'for we are come to do Him homage.' At once King Herod called together the priestly caste and the learned Rabbis, and asked them where it was that the Messiah should be born; and they, thinking of Micah's words, answered 'Bethlehem.'[1] And the Magi he asked at what time precisely the star was first seen. They now left Jerusalem on their way to Bethlehem, and as they did so the star again appeared, and seemed to lead them on, and to stand over the village. Once there, they would easily find Joseph's abode. At this point in the narrative it is first spoken of as a 'house,' so we gather that he must have removed Mary and the infant from the stable where the birth took place.

We have no details of the scene that followed, except that to the infant lying there in His mother's arms, helpless, poor, a Hebrew, these Eastern sages offered gold, frankincense, and myrrh, the products of the country whence they came, the tokens of homage to their new-found King, and God, and brother-man. They at least were not, as were the Jews, blinded to dignity and

[1] Micah 5, 2.

majesty and deity by meanness of earthly surroundings.

A dream that one or other of the wise men had, acted as a warning to them not to go back to Jerusalem, to Herod, to tell him about their having found the child. They returned to their own country by another way. Baffled so, and yet determined at all cost to secure himself, for he was jealous of another king rising up to replace him, he had all the male children under two years old in Bethlehem put to death (now we see why he had asked the Magi when it was they first noticed the star); and perhaps as many as twenty (Bethlehem was but a small place)[1] innocent little ones were the first martyrs for Christ. But Jesus Himself was not among the number: for Joseph, too, had had a dream, and had stolen off with Mary and the child, far away into Egypt. There they would be safe, for Herod could not reach them. And they would not be entirely among strangers, for many Jews had settled in the Nile valley, and they had a temple, and their sacred books and Rabbinic comments had roused

[1] Farrar.

great interest in the minds of the educated Egyptians of Leontopolis, and their Scriptures had been done into Greek at Alexandria, and their Rabbis were founding a distinctively Egyptian school of Jewish theology. Joseph would have occupation, too, for there were trade-guilds, of goldsmiths and silversmiths and nail-makers and needle-makers, and no doubt of woodworkers also, just as there are trades unions now, which supported a stranger newly come and helped him to find work.

But Egypt was not a place to stay in long, for the people at large hated the Jews, both for their religion and for their rivalry in trade, and spoke harshly of them and treated them with contempt, and it seemed as though a crisis might at any time occur, and they be all expelled.

So when Joseph heard of Herod's death —a horrible death it was—he set out for his native land. He would have liked to settle in Bethlehem, 'his own city,' as no doubt he intended when he left Nazareth to go there for the enrolling. But the new ruler of Judæa, the Ethnarch Archelaus, was as vicious and cruel as his father, and had

begun his reign with bloodshed. So Joseph kept to the coast-line, and went on further north. He had not wished to settle at Nazareth, where his own and Mary's friends lived, and where no doubt unkind things had been said about them, but now he will pluck up courage and go home. In Galilee a son of Herod's was ruling—Antipas, a man, like the rest of his family, of low principle and shameless life, but not likely to concern himself about a possible claimant to the throne of the other province, Judæa.

Jesus was probably still only a few months old, and would know nothing of the dangers which He had escaped, or the strange lands through which He had been journeying. His more conscious life began in the village home in Nazareth, which we must now try to picture.

CHAPTER II

THE HOME

Bounding the great plain of Esdraelon, on the north, is a range of limestone hills, which opens here and there into little gaps or bays. Nazareth stands within one of these. In the distance it is seen 'clinging like a whitewashed wasps' nest to the hillside.'[1] It is reached from the plain below by a crooked path, so steep and narrow that every traveller has a bad word for it. The village lies in and reaches a little upwards from a hollow, 1,144 feet above sea level.[2] Clustering hills rise to 1,602 feet behind. There is but little pasturage upon them. In the spring season wild flowers grow—mignonette, larkspur, anemones, and roses—and in the cultivated gardens of the village are clumps of olive-trees and palms.

[1] Mark Twain. [2] *Survey of Western Palestine.*

But at other times there is only barren rock.

From the village itself there is no landscape to be seen, for it lies secluded in its saucer-shaped basin, 'enclosed by mountains as a flower is by leaves.'[1] To get the view you must go on and up to the summit of the cliffs. There it is magnificent. But for the present let us keep to Nazareth itself.

The streets, if such they can be called, are narrow and not very clean. The paving is of irregular flat stones, sloping inwards so as to form a sort of gutter in the middle, down which the rain-water (when there is rain) carries away the filth. The houses on either side present a blank wall, unbroken save here and there by recesses used for shops.

There are some buildings at the present day which are modern—a mosque, a convent, and a Church of the Annunciation—but, except for these, the general appearance of the place cannot be very unlike what it was in New Testament times. Not that these are the same walls and roofs as then: the limestone of which they were built

[1] Quaresmius.

is much too soft to have lasted so long. The guides show to tourists what they say are the sites of Mary's kitchen and Joseph's workshop, and the dining-table of Jesus and His Apostles, and the synagogue where He read from the book of the Prophet Isaiah; but it is not probable that any of these remains are authentic. The 'Virgin's Well,' however, we may suppose to be the same which Mary used. They show, too, a certain precipice as the one from which the people were going to cast Jesus down headlong: its bold and striking appearance has evidently been the reason for its being selected, but it is a long way from the village.

The houses in Eastern villages are, and were, of the simplest construction. That in which Joseph and Mary lived would be very small; it was only the well-to-do who had large ones, or had them built of brick or stone. The dwellings of the poor were mere square huts of clay dried hard in the sun and whitewashed. Out of the clay walls and roof there grew patches of grass and even wild flowers; but, with so scanty and hard a bed, a few days' sunshine dried them

up, and the housewife pulled them to start the fire in her oven. Sometimes a 'leprosy' came out on the walls, a fungous growth perhaps, or an exudation of saltpetre; it had to be got rid of, or the house broken down.[1] Stairs on the outside led up to the roof, which was flat, and was used almost as much as the ground floor. Here lay drying in the sun vegetables and fruit for winter consumption. It was a promenade also, where the inhabitants enjoyed a fresher air than in the stuffy streets, or watched the flocks and herds pasturing in the plain; and in summer it was often a sleeping place. Some people who were better off than Jesus' parents seem to have been would cover in a portion of the roof, and make of it a guest-chamber.

There was only one room below—this was the whole house of the poor—one room for kitchen, living-room, bedroom, tool-house, everything.

It had no windows; what light there was came through the open doorway, and in some houses from a hole in the centre of the roof, which served as chimney.

There was very little furniture. The

[1] Lev. 14, 33-53.

mode of life of Orientals was simple; the climate being warm, they lived much in the open air; and the houses were as scantily furnished as they were lightly built.

The bedding of the family consisted of a few carpets, rolled up and put in a corner during the day, or, in the summer, packed away in a big box, to keep them from insects. Some houses had a wooden couch (κράββατος), but this was a luxury. Night-dresses were not used; people slept in their day-clothes, or with only the outer garment removed. The being without this outer garment was all that was implied when a person was said to be 'naked.'

There were no chairs; a few mats and cushions served the purpose.

The father's bench and tools were here also, when he was not using them outside; and it was troublesome in winter to keep the iron from rusting, for there was not much protection against damp air in an open clay hut whose floor was the bare ground.

Some earthenware jars and pots held all that was wanted for cooking.

In cold weather a charcoal fire was kindled in a pan of earthenware, narrow at the bottom and spreading to eighteen inches in diameter at the top; but better houses had a brazier, or stand of brass or copper, two feet high, with a chafing dish in the upper surface to hold the fire. Where charcoal was scarce, dried dung was used instead.

There was not much need for artificial light; it was bedtime when it was dark. Still, each house had a lamp, and a stand to set it on. The lamp was of earthenware, in the shape of a rather deep saucer, with a lip, like that of a cream-jug, to hold the wick. It stood sometimes on a high ledge in the wall, but usually on the floor, and therefore its stand had to be a high one, so that it might, as Jesus said, 'give light to all that are in the house.'[1] An earthen jar held the oil with which to replenish it when the light grew dim. The foolish virgins in the parable left this at home; the wise 'took oil in their vessels with their lamps.'[2]

The measure (or 'bushel,' as our A.V.

[1] Matt. 5, 15. [2] Matt. 25, 4.

has it, though the word μόδιος was used in a general sense as well as for a specific quantity) stood ready to hand. It was useful in all sorts of ways. Things were put into it, as into a drawer or bag; it was turned upside down and the lamp set upon it; now it made a convenient little table, and now it was a plate.

There was also a besom with which the housewife might sweep the floor, as did the woman in the parable who had lost a piece of silver.[1]

Water, fetched from the one fountain in the village street, was kept in large jars; and there were perhaps a few bags or bottles of goat-skin to hold wine. I say perhaps, because the sour wine of the country, though poor stuff, was not in every home a common beverage.

Then there was a hand-mill to grind the corn. It was made of two stones, the lower one convex, and the concave surface of the upper fitting loosely over it. The grain trickled down a hole through the centre of the upper stone, and was ground by the upper being turned round and round upon

[1] Luke 15, 8.

the lower one. A peg near the rim was the handle. The mother did the grinding; she sat on the ground with the mill before her, and turned the handle with her right hand while with her left she kept up the supply of grain.[1] Some people had larger mills, which required two to turn them. The grain was kept in two stone pots; it was generally barley; wheat was a luxury, for rich folk. There was nothing to hold the meal; that was ground fresh each time it was required. It was a pleasant sound in the ears of the Jewish peasant, this grinding of the corn, for it meant food to eat. A long silence from it was a mark of desolation in the land. The 'sound of the millstones'[2] was one of the things which Jehovah once said He would take away from His people because they would not hear His words.

Lastly, in the doorway hung the Mesusah, a little oblong box containing a roll of parchment on which were written in twenty-two lines two passages of the Law.[3]

Such was the humble home to which the

[1] Matt. 24, 41. [2] Jer. 25, 10.
[3] Deut. 6, 4-9, and 11, 13-21.

parents of Jesus brought Him when still an infant, and in which He lived and learned during those thirty years of quiet preparation for the great work that He was destined to do.

CHAPTER III

CHILDHOOD

One token of the interest with which children were regarded in Jewish homes is found in the number of different names given to them for successive stages of their growth.

The first was 'jeled' (fem. 'jaldah'), *i.e.*, 'born.' The child whose mother, when she could no longer hide him, took for him an ark of bulrushes, and put him in it, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink, was a jeled.[1] Jesus was so called by anticipation in the prophetic passage, 'Unto us a child (jeled) is born, unto us a son (ben, a term of more general meaning) is given.'[2] And He would be actually so called when He lay a helpless babe upon His mother's knee.

Next came the 'jonek,' or 'suckling.' This word was used also, figuratively, of

[1] Ex. 2, 3. [2] Isa. 9, 6.

plants, for a sucker or sapling; and in the latter sense was prophetically applied to Jesus—'He grew up before him as a tender plant' (jonek).[1]

When the child, satisfied no longer with the breast alone, began to want other and more solid nutriment, it was called 'olel.' That was a sad state of famine and desolation when 'the tongue of the jonek cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst; the olalim ask bread, and no one breaketh it unto them.'[2]

At two years of age he was weaned, and a family feast was held to mark the event.[3] Now he was called 'gamul,' the 'finished' or 'weaned' one. And perhaps Jesus, like many other child at this stage in its history, longed for the breast, and sobbed with disappointment to find His comfort taken away, till, humbled and chastened, He cried and fretted no longer, but found peace in the soft embrace of His mother's arms, and lay still and was content; even as that royal ancestor of His ceased from busying his heart with pride, and from lifting up his eyes to what was not for him to have, and

[1] Isa. 53, 2. [2] Lam. 4, 4. [3] Gen. 21, 8.

'stilled and quieted his soul, like a weaned child with his mother.'[1]

Still in the East children are not weaned until they are two or three years old. For they are liable to such things as dysentery and small-pox, and a late weaning is thought to lessen the risk. They have their common infantile disorders, as Western children have. And the teething time is as much a trouble to them as to us.

Another year passes. Up to this time the child had been carried by His mother in her arms, or slung on her hip, or over her shoulder. It was only very great people who employed a nurse.[2] Now He began to walk at her side, holding on to her skirts, or with His hand in hers, and 'taph,' or little brother, was His name.

Next He became an 'elem,' or firm and strong one. After that, growing self-reliant, He was a 'naar,' or youth, one who shakes off, or shakes himself free. And, lastly, the young man, who could bear arms and fight, was called 'bachur,' the ripened one.

On the day that He reached three years of age, and was no longer 'gamul,' but 'taph,'

[1] Ps. 131, 2. [2] 2 Kings, 11, 2.

something would take place which will show us the sort of religious training a Hebrew child received. He would be put for the first time into a little coat, such as we read that Samuel's mother made and brought up to Shiloh year by year for her boy to wear. To its hem were fastened four tassels (tsitsith), with a thread of bright blue interwoven. And He would be told that the blue thread had a meaning: Jehovah had bidden the children of Israel wear it, 'that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye go not about after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: that ye may remember and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.'[1] And He would be told that He must be very careful of His tassels, and not let them get torn or dirty, because they were a sign, given by Jehovah himself, that He belonged to Him.

In this and many another way did He begin to learn, long before any set lessons were given Him. It would be difficult to say when His religious education com-

[1] Num. 15, 38-41.

menced. He was from the first surrounded with object-lessons in religion ; the ordinary life of the home was full of symbolism.

On the doorpost hung a small cylindrical case of bright metal with some letters on which everyone who came in or went out touched with his finger, and then kissed the finger and said a prayer. Even before He could speak the child would notice this, and when He happened to be carried near it, in His mother's arms, would put out His hand to touch it. And as He grew older and could talk, He would ask what it was, and Mary would tell Him that it was the Mesusah, and that the letters on the case were 'Shaddai,' the name of the Most High, and that inside was a little square of parchment folded lengthwise, on which were written two passages from the Law. And she would say them to Him, that He might begin to know them for Himself.

'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thine heart; and thou shalt teach

them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thy house, and upon thy gates.'[1]

'And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, that I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will give grass in thy fields for thy cattle, and thou shalt eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves lest your heart be deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them: and the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and He shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit, and ye perish quickly from off the good land which

[1] Deut. 6, 4-9.

the Lord giveth you. Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul; and ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, talking of them, when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thine house, and upon thy gates: that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, upon the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of the heavens above the earth.'[1]

They had done as He had commanded, and written these His words upon the doorposts of their house, and He had promised, 'The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.'[2]

And there were those, she would tell Him, who bound the words for a sign upon their hand, and for frontlets between their eyes; and would describe to Him the tephil-

[1] Deut. 11, 13-21. [2] Ps. 121, 8.

lin or phylacteries which the strict Pharisees wore—tiny leather boxes containing the two passages quoted above and two others.[1]

He would notice how every member of the family said prayers both morning and evening, how before every meal they washed their hands and prayed, and after it gave thanks.

On the evening before the Sabbath the mother prepared the best supper that she could afford, and lit the Sabbath lamp, ready for when the father should come in from the service at the synagogue, and bless each child with the blessing of Israel before sitting down to meat. A portion of the dough she set apart, when baking the household bread, for the stranger, the poor, the widow, or the fatherless. Wine and spices or sweet-smelling herbs were placed on the table, and they, too, and the lamp were blessed.

On the next evening again the lamp, wine, and spices appeared on the supper table; and when the sun set, at once all rose and washed their hands, and the father pronounced the words of separation—the separation of the Sabbath from the ordinary day.

[1] Ex. 13, 1–10 and 11–16.

And the meaning of it all, the divine institution of the day of rest, would be explained to the inquiring boy.

One night He would see His mother light some candles (as many as there were persons in the family), next night twice as many, on the third night three times the number, and so on for eight nights, until the house was brilliant with the unwonted illumination; and He would be told how Judas the Maccabee caught up the standard of revolt as it dropped from his father's aged hand, beat in battle again and again the Syrian generals, and, while they were gathering fresh troops to crush him, blockaded the Syrian garrison in Jerusalem, purified the Temple that Antiochus three years before had polluted with foul heathen rites, put in good order the ground on which it stood, then overgrown with shrubs, erected a new altar, and held a solemn Feast of Dedication, which lasted for eight days, and had ever since been kept up each year by pious Jews.

And the child's heart would catch from His mother's voice and look something of the national pride, and would swell with the first motions of that patriotism which was

in the years to come to add bitterness to His cup of sorrow, when He should know more fully the history of His people, and find the faults which had been their ruin in the past confronting Him again, and frustrating His efforts to bring them deliverance: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!'[1]

In the spring came two days when everyone was busy merrymaking. If the child had been at the synagogue service the night before, He would have noticed that during the reading whenever the name 'Haman' was mentioned there were angry shouts and stamping of feet. He would ask what it all meant, and would be told how, five centuries ago, the great Xerxes married a young Jewess, Esther, and how his favourite minister, Haman, was going to have a slaughter of the Jews in the empire because Esther's cousin, Mordecai, did not pay him enough respect; and how Mordecai was promoted

[1] Matt. 23, 37.

and Haman hanged, and the Jews were allowed to defend themselves, and they killed thousands of those who were going to kill them; and because Haman had drawn lots to find a day for the massacre, this anniversary was called the Feast of Lots. And the boy would think some such thought as in after years He expressed in the words, 'Fear not them that kill the body,' or 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered.'

A month later he would miss His father and some of the neighbours: they had gone to Jerusalem. One evening, that of the 14th Nisan, He would see His mother looking all over the house with lighted candle: she was searching for any leaven that might be hidden. He would notice that the bread given Him to eat during the days that followed was close and hard. And then He would be told how in the days of old their forefathers were captives and oppressed in Egypt, and how, on this 14th day of Abib or Nisan, they killed a lamb without blemish for each household, and sprinkled its blood on the doorpost, and ate the roast meat with unleavened bread like this, and with bitter herbs; and how in the night the angel of

the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites, but in every house of their oppressors smote the eldest son that he died; and how then the Egyptians thrust them out in haste, and so they got away into liberty, and at last into a land of their own; and that now every year the men of Israel went up to Jerusalem from all parts of the world to keep the festival. Thither was Joseph gone, and this was why they had unleavened bread to eat. And Jesus would begin dimly to apprehend that salvation was linked with suffering, yea, with shedding of blood, and those ideas would be already forming which enabled Him in later years to meet His last agony with fortitude, likening Himself to that innocent Paschal lamb, and asking His disciples, whensoever they should keep that feast, to do it in remembrance of Him.

A few weeks later, and in clear weather and beautiful sunshine, the child would see the labourers begin to cut the grain, the barley first, and then the wheat. And when the first loaves were made of the wheat, again would the elder folk set off to Jerusalem to offer them as a wave-offering

to the Lord, and also, the child would be told, to keep the memory of the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai.

In rather more than three months' time, on the 1st of Tisri, a blast of trumpets ushered in the New Year. No work was done that day, but the thoughts of all turned to the account that was being taken of their lives by God in Heaven. Ten days later came 'The Day,' the solemn Day of Atonement. The adults went out early with white shrouds and caps to the synagogue, and stayed there all day long. And Jesus would hear how at Jerusalem the High Priest, on this day alone of all the year, after elaborate purifications, was entering the Holy of Holies, and perhaps He would be told some of the details of these solemn rites, and would feel even now in some measure the awfulness of sin, and the necessity of suffering, for that 'without shedding of blood is no remission.'

Now all the crops of the year had been gathered in, and the vintage was over. On the 15th of the month everybody began to collect the boughs of trees and twine them together into tents. And Joseph and Mary

and all the family turned out of their house to live for seven days in one of these leafy booths. And the child, as He helped carry the boughs and played about the doorway, would hear the story of how for forty years their forefathers wandered through the wilderness, living in tents, until God brought them into this their own dear land, and gave them houses to live in, and fields to till, and fruitful harvests ; and now, year by year, they celebrate His praise in harvest thanksgiving. And at night the lamps were lit in the booths, and torches were carried round, and there was singing and playing of instruments, and Jesus would catch the gladness of those about Him, and join in their praise of Jehovah, who had delivered the nation from bondage, and was the giver of all good things.

Nor would His questions meet with any rebuff. In a Jewish home the child was not called a tease when he wanted to know what things were, and why they were so. The people of Palestine had more leisure than we have, and children were not, as they sometimes are with the modern housewife, in the way. They thought a great

deal of their little ones, these Jews. He who had no child was said to be 'like one dead.' A miserable woman was the wife who was not also a mother. And this was how they spoke of one who died without offspring: 'Weep sore for him that goeth away, for he shall return no more.'[1] The expectation that of their race should be born the promised Messiah—their God, the Saviour of the nation, the Ruler of the world—gave a certain sacredness to their posterity. No light in Israel must be put out.

This was no doubt one of the causes which made the position of the woman better in Judaism than among other Orientals. She was an important person, for she was or might be a mother. The wife was marked by her very name as the equal of her husband. He was 'ish' (man), she was 'ishah' (woman). She was his helpmeet, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh.

The home of the Jew was home indeed. The virtues that he valued most were the domestic ones. The family was a sacred thing, and its sanctity inviolate. Love had

[1] Jer. 22, 10; Moed K. 27.

no meaning but as between parent and child, husband and wife. 'A Jewess dares love only God, her parents, her husband, and her children.'[1] 'God could not be everywhere,' it was said, 'and therefore He made mothers.' And that saying seems to us to be near the truth, when we think of how strong and far-reaching is the influence which a mother exerts upon the character and destiny of her children. She is to them almost as God.

'From the inexhaustible spring of Jewish family love,' says a modern Jew,[2] 'rise the saviours of the human race.' The statement would apply, at any rate, to the case with which we Christians are concerned, for it was from this spring that did arise *the* one Saviour of mankind. Amid such family love was He reared, and He went out from it into the wider world filled with piety towards the All-father, and tenderness towards men His brothers. It cannot but be that Jesus' character was to some extent moulded by that of Mary. She must have been a good woman to have been allowed a share in the bringing up of such a son.

[1] Alexander Weill. [2] Hess, M.

But the atmosphere of affection in which He grew was not enervating. Love was based on reverence. In scarce any nation has the parental authority been so highly exalted as in Israel. 'Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,' had the finger of God himself written on the tables of stone. In the Law it was ordered that, 'If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and though they chasten him will not hearken unto them: then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a riotous liver and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.'[1]

In the special service of curses and

[1] Deut. 21, 18-21.

blessings which Moses arranged, to be said on Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, this was one of the sentences:—(The Levites were to say with a loud voice), 'Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother.' (And all the people were to say), 'Amen.'

Jesus, even as a little child, would hear the story of how Isaac yielded himself a victim ready to die at his father's will, and would think perchance that He too might so submit in such a case. For Him in later years the time did come when in His agony He exclaimed, 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

He would learn, too, to repeat the command to honour father and mother, and, as He became able to read for Himself, would find that duty enjoined over and over again in the Scriptures, and backed by promises and threats. But with Him obedience, we may think, would spring rather from love than from fear. It is clear from all His after life and words that filial affection was strong in Him. He names it as one of the horrible things that should mark the coming persecution of His disciples for righteousness' sake

that 'the father shall deliver up his child, and children shall rise up against parents.' [1] He cannot believe that there could be a father who, 'if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone, or if he shall ask him for a fish, will give him a serpent.' With Him men, though they be evil, know how to give good gifts unto their children. The son who has wasted his substance with riotous living, and comes homeward, even before he can speak a word of his penitence, while yet afar off, his father sees, and is moved with compassion, and runs, and falls on his neck and kisses him. The fittest name by which He can speak of the God He worships, and whose will it is His meat and drink to do, is not 'I am,' or 'Jehovah,' but 'Father.' The head of the little home at Nazareth must have been a good man, since Jesus could associate with the idea of fatherhood only kindness, and watchful care, and patient love.

[1] Matt. 10, 21.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST LESSONS

The education of a Jew was religious only. As Judaism had much to say about the home, so the home had much to say about Judaism. It was in the home that the instruction began, and the mother was the first teacher. Indeed, she is always so, whether she will or no, for by spirit and example she teaches either the love of truth and goodness, or the pursuit of pleasure and fashion and wealth; but she ought also to be the first teacher by word of mouth of the simple dogmas of the faith. To this duty were Jewish women urged by their sacred scriptures and by the precepts of the Rabbis. And all the long series of traditions about motherhood, and of stories of pattern mothers, would influence them in the same direction.

Definite religious teaching began as soon as the children could understand anything at all. 'From their earliest consciousness they learned the laws.'[1] 'They are taught,' Philo wrote of them to Caius, 'from their very swaddling clothes.'

'From a babe' had Timothy 'known the Scriptures,' and the 'unfeigned faith' that was in him had 'dwelt first' in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice.[2] And 'from a babe' would Jesus begin to know them too.

As soon as He could speak words plainly Mary would try to teach Him a verse out of the Law, so training the memory of sound even before He was able to recognise the look of the letters.

At about three years of age the alphabet was learned; and by the time that He began to spell out the words written on a scroll He would already repeat several verses by ear.

For the Jews, in order that the very words of the Scriptures might be preserved, in an age when there was no printing-press, and written copies were not too plentiful,

[1] Jos. *contra Apion.* 2, 19 [2] 2 Tim. 3, 15; 1, 5.

laid great stress on the cultivation of an accurate memory. The Talmud likens the ideal student to 'a well-plastered cistern, from which not a drop escapes.' 'Take heed to thyself,' the Law had said, 'and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget,' &c.[1]; and the comment in the Mishnah on the passage is, 'He who forgets any one thing in the study of the Mishnah, Scripture imputes it to him as if he had forfeited his life.'[2]

So far did they carry this learning by heart, that their discussions were conducted not so much by logical reasoning as by the ingenious application to the matter in hand of passages from the sayings of the better known Rabbis; and even their ordinary conversation was freely interlarded with quotations. To anyone who reads the literature of the Hebrews and compares it with the words of Jesus, it is evident that the mind of the great Teacher was saturated with their Scriptures and commentaries, and His memory stored with the expressions that they employ. And this, so far from detracting from His reputation for originality, indeed

[1] Deut. 4, 9. [2] Pirqey Abhoth, iii. 9.

only enhances it. For the marvel is that He did not grow up, like the rest of them, a mere repeater of phrases. His divine spirituality is in this strikingly apparent, that His vision pierced through the mist of tradition in which He was reared, to the sunlight of eternal truth. The growth, in such an atmosphere, of an individuality so unique is the mark of something that is more than human.

The first words that the child would learn to say were from the Shema, the Jews' solemn confession of faith. It was the same that was written on the little rolls of parchment hung up in the doorway and worn on the forehead and wrist—the Mesusah and the phylacteries. He learned it early, and well, for it was to be the most important part of His daily prayers.

'Hear, O Israel,' it began: 'the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' And the little child, He loved His mother, that He knew, and, loving her, loved the Lord His God also; for did not His mother so? Sitting in the house, or busy about her work,

or walking with pitcher on her head to fill it at the village well, at all hours and in all places would she repeat these words to Him, and make Him say them after her. So they became in His mind associated not with professional piety or sanctimoniousness, but with His mother's love and goodness, and with the sights and sounds of the fresh and wonderful world about Him. Grown to manhood, God was to Him the All-parent, and He saw Him in grass and lily and sparrow, and in men who were kind and true.

While the mother was naturally the first teacher, yet it was the father that by Jewish law and custom was regarded as the one responsible for the child's education. He would have more time for it than fathers have in these days. For the climate of Palestine being warm and pleasant, and the habits of life simple, the people had few wants and could live on very little, and so there was no need for men to work long hours. And indeed there were religious festivals enough to fill two months of the year, and at such times they were not allowed to work, whether they would or no.

The father was 'bound to teach his son.'[1] This duty claimed precedence even over his meals. To omit it would be to deserve the name of Amhaarets, a vulgar and irreligious person.[2] In discharging it he felt that he was blessed, for he was an ambassador of the Most High. He thought of Moses going up to the top of the mount, the awestruck people at its base unable to see him for stormcloud and smoke, and then descending to repeat to them what the voice of Jehovah had spoken to him there, the divine Law. To himself now had come a like privilege, on him there rested a like responsibility.[3]

In that Law he was charged to teach diligently to his children the words which the Lord commanded, to talk to them when he sat in the house and when he walked by the way, when he lay down and when he rose up. And if his son should ask him, 'What mean the statutes which the Lord our God hath commanded you?' he was to tell him the whole story of how their forefathers were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt,

[1] Qiddushin, 29, a. [2] Sotah, 22, a.
[3] Sanhedrin, 99, b.

and how God had brought them out, with signs and wonders, and had given to Israel a land of their own, and made of them a nation, and had commanded them to do all these statutes for their good always.[1]

[1] Deut. 6.

CHAPTER V

SCHOOL

The Talmuds show that it was a special duty of the father to take his child to school in the morning; even men of distinction would not eat their breakfast until this was done.

At five years of age we may suppose that Jesus began to go. Delicate children waited till they were six, or even more, but it was not long after Jesus' time that education was made by law compulsory for those who were six years old. It is not certain that there did at this time exist in every town a day-school as well as the Sabbath-school which the minister of the synagogue taught, but it is probable that there was one in very many towns.

What is known is this. After the return from exile in Babylon, the Scribes founded

schools, though not for young children, and Ezra ordered that schoolmasters should be allowed to settle in any place they might choose.[1]

One hundred years before Christ, Simeon ben Schetach, president of the Sanhedrin, a Pharisee, founded at Jerusalem the first child's school, calling it Beth-hassepher (the house of the book). About A.D. 64 Jesus ben Gamala, who was High Priest before the destruction of the Temple, ordered that every town should have a primary school, which should be free; if there were not so many as twenty-five children, the Chazzan was to teach them, and for each twenty-five pupils there was to be one master.[2]

But this order implies the existence of such schools earlier, for a system that could be made compulsory must have been already in partial, if not in general, use.

If the community were too poor to build a school, the synagogue might be used on week-days as well as on the Sabbath.

The arrangements were peculiar. There were no benches or chairs. One principle of Jewish education was that there should

[1] Babha Bathra, 21, b. [2] *Ibid.* 21, a.

be no distinction between teacher and taught, and so either they all stood or all sat on the ground. From the phrase 'thine eyes shall see thy teachers,' in Isa. 30, 20, it was inferred that all the children in a class must be so placed as to be able to see their instructor. They stood, then, or sat, in a semicircle with the teacher at the centre, that the Law might be fulfilled.

In small schools the master was the same person as the Chazzan, or officer of the synagogue. He took no fees from his pupils: the congregation paid him a salary for his work as a whole. He was required to be a married man.

For those children who had not already learned the alphabet at home, it was the first lesson in the school. The whole class repeated the letters in musical cadence—Aleph, Beth, Gimel, &c.—over and over again. Each letter in turn was written with chalk upon a board, and picked out in a manuscript roll wherever it occurred, and copied by the pupils on their own little tablets.

The alphabet learned, a passage from the Scriptures was written on the board,

and chanted by the children until they knew it off by heart; and then another and another. And soon a whole psalm was sung and learned in the same way. Gradually they began to read for themselves, and one of the class would read aloud from a roll, and the master would ask them questions, and answer theirs, and tell them stories to illustrate the meaning.

The reading-book was always some portion of the Law. For Israel there was no other literature, no other learning, than this.

Their belief in its inspiration was entire and unwavering. 'He who says that Moses wrote one verse out of his own head is a liar and a contemner of the word of God.'[1] 'He who affirms that the Law is not come from heaven shall have no part in the world to come.'[2] School and synagogue existed only to spread the knowledge of the Law. 'He who knows not the Law is accursed,' the Rabbis said. As Hillel put it, 'The schools make for wisdom, the study of the Law for life.'[3]

[1] Sanh. x. 1.
[2] *Ibid.* 99, a.
[3] Pirqey Abhoth, iii. 2, 3, &c.

'These are the things that bring forth fruit in this life, and whose good endures in the life to come—to honour your father and mother, to practise charity, to follow peace with all men, and, above all, the study of the Law.' [1]

Jesus would have asked many questions, and heard much already, at home and in the synagogue, about the history of the chosen people. Now that He could read for Himself, He would begin with what was the written authority for the customs and ceremonies which He had seen—the book of Leviticus. He would go through the details of the sacrificial rites, so carefully wrought out, for burnt-offerings, for meal-offerings, and for peace-offerings; how if anyone, priest, ruler, common person, or even the whole congregation, should sin, and do any of the things which the Lord had commanded not to be done, though he knew it not, yet was he guilty, and must bring his offering to the priest—bullock, or goat, or ram—to be slain, in order that atonement might be made, and his sin forgiven.

What any man had taken by robbery, or

[1] Peah, i. 1.

got by oppression, or kept for himself when deposited with him as a trust, or found and concealed, or sworn about falsely, that must be restored in full, and a fifth part added, and a guilt-offering slain before the Lord.

He read of the consecration of Aaron and his sons: how they were washed with water, and clothed with symbolic vestments, and anointed with oil, and set apart with solemn rites, that they might stand before God and be priests to offer sacrifice for the people.

He learned that God had made some foods clean and some unclean; that impurity of whatever kind must be scrupulously shunned, or with care and pains be expiated; that to God alone must sacrifices be offered. He had separated them from others, and to Him they should be a holy people: they were to be kind-hearted, righteous without respect of persons, not to carry tales, nor to cherish ill-feeling against any, to keep His Sabbaths and reverence His sanctuary, to honour age, and to be true and just in all their dealings.

They were not to walk in the evil cus-

toms, which God abhorred, of the heathens whom He had cast out before them. Especially holy must the priests be, in all their relations; there must be no blemish in themselves, even as there must be none in the sacrifices which they offered.

Set feasts were prescribed; a rest for the land every seventh year; and every fifty years a jubilee, when every man returned to his possession, and the bondman went free.

If they should walk in all these statutes and keep His commandments, and do them, then should the land yield her increase, and they should eat bread to the full, and He would give peace to the land, and none should make them afraid: He would walk among them and be their God, and they should be His people. But if they would not hearken unto Him and do all these commandments, then should they consume away with disease, and sow their seed in vain, and be smitten before their enemies. And if still they walked contrary to His will, seven times more and yet again should they be chastised for their sins, their cities a waste, their land a desolation, themselves scat-

tered among the nations, until they should confess their iniquity, and their hearts be humbled; and then would He remember the covenant of their ancestors whom He brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that He might be their God.

And as the boy read there would arise in His mind a high ideal of worship and of conduct, and a growing dread, yea, a hatred, of sin, that was so linked with suffering and death; and already would He begin to enter into that mystery of sacrifice of which Himself was by-and-by to be the ultimate example.

It was not at first the whole book of Leviticus that He knew, but only the first eight chapters, containing the laws about sacrifices.

This was one of the portions of Scripture which in the time of the Talmud, if not earlier, were copied on small rolls for the use of children. For no other purpose were extracts from the sacred books allowed to be made. Other portions so copied were: the Shema;[1] the history of the Creation,

[1] Deut. 4, 4-9; 11, 13-21; Num. 15, 37-41.

to the Flood; the Hallel;[1] and the national organisation.[2]

The use of these sections for reading lessons would prepare the boy for the fuller study, after Leviticus, of the remaining books of the Pentateuch, which was what the Jews called Torah (the Law), or Torah Mosheh (the Law of Moses). Thus He learned the early history of the Jewish family, the story of its three great ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; how the family grew into a nation in Egypt, its dire oppression and its great deliverance, its wanderings in the wilderness; the giving of the Law, civil and religious, the establishment of worship and the separation of the priesthood, the numbering and organisation of the people, and the last solemn charges of Moses. And the record so unique would kindle the fire of national pride within Him, and His heart would leap in response when He reached the closing words:

> Happy art thou, O Israel:
> Who is like unto thee, a people saved by the Lord!

An 'Israelite indeed' it would be His ambition to become.

[1] Psalms 113–118. [2] Num. 1–10, 35.

Next in order, and almost equal in importance, to the Law came the Prophets. Of these there were two divisions—the earlier Prophets, which were the purely historical books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings; and the later Prophets, which consisted of the prophetical books as they stand in our Bible from Isaiah onwards, with the exception of Daniel.

In all these the boy would trace the practical working out of the principles which God had enunciated in the Law: how obedience did bring victory, and waywardness defeat; how the worship of the true God, and moral purity, and happiness and well-being, whether of the individual or of the nation, went hand in hand; and how through all reverses, yea, even through their sins, the love and mercy of God ever waited to bless them when they should repent and return.

That Jesus knew well the prophetical writings could be shown by a list too long to print here of references to them in His discourses.[1] And that list suggests that of them all His favourite was the book of Isaiah.

[1] *See* Queen's Printers' *Aids*.

There was no definite canon of the Scripture in Jesus' time. Besides the Law and the Prophets there were other books in existence, treating of the national history and religion, which were esteemed each according to its own merits. All were called sacred; a quotation from any one of them, as from the Law or Prophets, is introduced in the Mishnah with the words 'It is written,' or 'It is said,' or 'He says.' In the New Testament, and especially the Epistle to the Hebrews, the same is the case. For, as St. Paul puts it when writing to Timothy, 'Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.'[1]

These, the Hagiographa, were read in the schools after the Law and the Prophets. To some of them Jesus seems in later life to refer, and especially to the Psalms. He quoted often from the Psalms, and used the name as a general title for all as yet uncanonical Scriptures.[2] 'All things,' He said, 'must needs be fulfilled which

[1] 2 Tim. 3, 16.

[2] *E.g.*, in St. Matthew only, 21, 16, 42; 22, 44; 23, 38, 39; 25, 41; 26, 24; 27, 35, 43, 46.

are written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning me.'[1] The book of Daniel also He had read,[2] and perhaps Job,[3] Chronicles,[4] Proverbs,[5] and others.

But it was not until after the time of Jesus, and after the fall of Jerusalem, that the Pharisean schools tried to settle definitely what books should be included in this third part of authoritative revelation, called generally the Hagiographa (Holy Scriptures). When at length a list was drawn up, it was this:—Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Chronicles.

What Jesus said of Judas, 'Good were it for that man if he had never been born,' comes from the book of Enoch, which was well known and esteemed at the time, though it never found a place in the canon; but as the phrase was a familiar one in the

[1] Luke 24, 44.

[2] Matt. 13, 43 (cf. Dan. 12, 3); Matt. 21, 44, and Luke 20, 18 (cf. Dan. 2, 45); Matt. 24, 15, and Mark 13, 14 (cf. Dan. 9, 27, and 12, 11); Matt. 26, 64 (cf. Dan. 7, 13); Matt. 28, 18 (cf. Dan. 7, 14).

[3] Matt. 24, 28 (cf. Job 39, 30).

[4] Matt. 23, 35, and Luke 11, 51 (cf. 2 Chron. 24, 20, 21).

[5] Luke 14, 10 (cf. Prov. 25, 7).

Rabbinical schools, it is possible that Jesus got it from hearing it in a synagogue address or in common conversation, and not at first-hand from the book itself. It is worth noting that James also, the Lord's brother, became in some way acquainted with the Apocrypha.[1]

We must not suppose that copies of all the Scriptures were placed in the hands of every child, as primers are in our class-rooms to-day. What Bible, then, did Jesus use? and where did He see it?

As has been already pointed out, there were certain sections of which copies were made for the use of children, and these would be the first reading-books in school. It is even possible that Joseph had a set at home. A complete manuscript of the whole of the sacred books only a very rich man could afford. There were undoubtedly manuscripts belonging to private individuals very much earlier than the time of Jesus;[2] and the number was more likely, under the influence of Scribes and Pharisees, to increase than to decrease.

[1] Cf. James 1, 6, 8, 25, with Ecclus. 7, 10; 1, 28; 14, 23.

[2] Macc. 1, 59, 60; Jos. *Antt.* 12, 5, 4.

The synagogue of course had a copy of the Law and the Prophets at least, and no doubt of some of the Hagiographa also, from which the lessons were read at the public services. This copy was in the care of the Chazzan, and would be available, if necessary, for use in school, and Jesus might borrow it when He became a man to read privately. Afterwards, while living at Capernaum, He would be able to consult the synagogue copy of that town also.

That He did use to the utmost what opportunities He had is clear from what has come down to us of His discourses and conversations.

He knew the Scriptures both by hearing them and by reading them Himself.

At the very beginning of His public work He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and He entered, as His custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read, and there was delivered unto Him the book of the Prophet Isaiah, and He opened the book and found the place where it was written, 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me.' [1]

[1] Luke 4, 16, 17.

He speaks of the Hebrew letters as only could one who knew them.[1]

'Have ye not read what David did?'[2] 'Have ye not read that He which made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said . . .?'[3] 'Yea: did ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?'[4] 'Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected . . .?'[5] 'But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying . . .?'[6]— that is the way He speaks to Pharisees and Scribes. Nay, He designates Himself and His disciples 'scribes' even as they.[7]

The Scriptures were constantly on His lips, and when He did not quote directly from them, they yet coloured His thoughts and supplied Him with His language.

He seems to have known them in the orginal Hebrew. Though He spoke in Aramæan, which was the ordinary dialect

[1] Matt. 5, 18.
[2] Matt. 12, 3
[3] Matt. 19, 4.
[4] Matt. 21, 16.
[5] Matt. 21, 42.
[6] Matt. 22, 31.
[7] Matt. 13, 51, 52, in Keim 2, 151.

of the people, He used the Hebrew text in quoting the Scriptures. Translations had probably not yet been made, other than the extempore ones of Rabbis commenting in the synagogue on the Hebrew passages that had just been read aloud; indeed, the need for them would scarcely arise until after the people had become widely and hopelessly dispersed in foreign lands.

By the time that the Gospels were written the Greek Septuagint, and possibly an Aramaic version somewhat resembling it, had come into use; and the Evangelists made quotations often from the LXX, or from something very like it, instead of directly from the Hebrew text.[1]

But even then, though the LXX was tolerated, and Greek and Latin were learned for the sake of intercourse with the larger world into which Israel had become merged, yet the Talmud, allowing any language to be used for things that were spoken, such as the Shema, or ordinary blessings or graces, still required that the writing on the phylacteries and the Mesusah, and also the solemn

[1] Keim 1, 83; 2, 163.

benediction pronounced by the priests, should be in Hebrew.[1]

The copies of the Scriptures that Jesus saw were written, not in the old Hebrew-Phœnician, but, like our own, in the square or Assyrian characters. This is evident from that expression of His, 'One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the Law.' For the jot (ἰῶτα) was the 'yod' (י), the smallest of the Hebrew letters, generally silent, with which His own name in its Hebrew form began; and the tittle (κεραία, a horn) was the only distinguishing mark between certain pairs of letters, as, for instance, between כ (caph) and ב (beth), or between ר (resch) and ד (daleth).

And for the same reason we may infer that it was the Assyrian characters which the boy learned to write. It has sometimes been made a question, Could Jesus write? There is little doubt about it. For though there was a professional class of writers, the scribes who made copies of the Scriptures, yet they were not writers only, but students and expounders also; and the people at large were able to write, sufficiently, that is,

[1] Megil. i. 8; Sotah vii. 1, 2.

for their own private purposes. Instances are mentioned in the Old Testament of writing not only by skilled scribes, but by priests[1] and by private individuals—householders,[2] husbands,[3] kings,[4] prophets,[5] and even so early as the days of Gideon, by the first young man he happened to meet.[6]

And we know from the Gospel story how Zacharias made signs for a tablet to be brought, and wrote 'His name is John'; and how Jesus himself once 'stooped and wrote with His finger on the ground.'

Short memoranda were made on tablets; for longer writings paper—the Egyptian papyrus—was used,[7] or parchment.[8] Quills are mentioned in 3 John 13, and black ink in 2 Cor. 3, 3; 2 John 12; 3 John 13. Josephus speaks also of gold ink,[9] and the Mishnah[10] of red and other colours.

When considering what books of the Bible Jesus read, we were anticipating a little the actual course of His education.

[1] Num. 5. 23.
[2] Deut. 6, 9.
[3] Deut. 24, 1.
[4] Isa. 38, 9.
[5] 2 Chron. 26, 22; Jer. 30, 2; Ezek. 24, 2, and 43, 11.
[6] Judg. 8, 14.
[7] 2 John 12.
[8] 2 Tim. 4, 13.
[9] *Antt.* 12, 2, 11.
[10] Meg. ii. 2.

We must not suppose that while still a boy, and being taught, He was able to get through the whole of those Scriptures with which undoubtedly He was familiar at the time when He began His public ministry.

Ordinary children in the country did little more than learn to read (from some of these Scriptures), perhaps also to write, and to repeat the more important passages of the Law. All that we can say of Jesus is that He, with His keener intelligence and more earnest character, would naturally take a greater interest in His studies than others, and make more rapid progress.

He would not be overworked. There was no strain in Jewish education. The middle of the day was free; there were no lessons between 10 A.M. and 3 P.M. And in the warm summer weather the hours were shortened. A few years later we find a rule in existence that there should be only four hours' work and no chastisement between 17th Thamuz and 9th Ab, *i.e.*, during our month of July.

Thus the mind of the boy kept its elasticity and freshness. He loved to learn, and when He first met with some of the

great teachers of religion, in the courts of the Temple at Jerusalem, forgot friends and home and all, and stayed on there, 'both hearing and asking them questions.' He was not, like some clever children, a mere cabinet of facts and phrases, but a living, thinking, truth-loving soul.

So far we have spoken only of His Biblical studies. He would hear something also of the comments that had been made by Rabbis of repute upon passages read as lessons in the synagogues. Already had these comments gained a considerable authority and become widely known. In time they became a sort of second Law, and were ascribed to Moses himself, and by the beginning of the second century were written down and arranged and indexed under the title of the Mishnah. And after that there began the accumulation of comments upon the Mishnah itself, and the formation in this way of a third Law, the Gemaras (complements) or Talmuds (lessons, teachings), one of Babylon, and another of Jerusalem; which Talmuds are the source of a good deal of our knowledge of the later Judaism.

But here we must leave the subject of the boy's education for a while, and look at some other aspects of His childhood, before we come to that important crisis in His life when, at the age of twelve or thirteen, He put away childish things and became a member of the congregation of Israel, His people.

CHAPTER VI

RECREATION

It was not all school. Everybody lived very much out of doors. And there were plenty of things in Nazareth to interest the boy, and some to amuse Him. A great gathering-place was the village well, where water poured through taps in a stone slab and fell into a trough below. Here the girls came, their pitchers poised upon their heads, and filled them, and stopped to talk over the current gossip of the place. Wayfarers halted here awhile to water their cattle and to rest, before pursuing their journey on towards Cana, or Ptolemais, or southward across the plain of Esdraelon. To a stranger at this day they seem bold and not over-modest, these Nazareth girls, with their single cotton garment frayed and worn, and their feet bare, and strings of

old coins around their forehead and cheeks, loitering by the fountain.

And the sober married women were there, drawing water for household purposes. Mary came, her long coloured cotton gown tied round the waist, and a white kerchief or wimple thrown over her head and shoulders, and fastened with a plaited coil of dark wool and silk. She walked erect, and the empty earthen water-pot lay on its side upon her head. And the boy came with her, His hand in hers. He would wear a linen tunic like a very long and close-fitting shirt, probably white with brown stripes, and a white turban, tied under His chin with a cord and falling on to His shoulders, His curly brown locks peeping out beneath. When He grew strong enough He would help to carry back the full pitchers to the house.

To this day the well may be seen in Nazareth; and it is called the 'fountain of the Virgin.' It is an arched recess of stone; water pours forth from a spout in the wall, and a shallow pool covers the floor. One woman may be holding her jar under the spout to be filled, others just going away with jars on their heads or shoulders; an

ass laden with a vessel on each side is taking a drink on his own account from the pool, and other women again are soaking garments in the water and then wringing them or beating them with bats.

And what is now, was then.

When children meet together in a village street in England they do not long remain inactive. They soon begin some game. And a favourite amusement is to imitate the more serious occupations of their elders. So they play at 'keeping shop,' or at a tea party, or at soldiering, and even at 'church.' Jewish children were like English ones: they, too, had games which answered to the customs of ordinary life. Sometimes, for instance, they would play at a wedding. One little boy was 'bridegroom,' and stepped out, the 'sons of the bride-chamber' following, to fetch home the bride. And the girls joined in, to accompany the bride, and made believe to carry torches, and to shake myrtle boughs over her head, and to beat drums and play on pipes, and sing and dance along the road.

Sometimes it would be a funeral. And then they marched very solemnly, beating

their breasts and howling, or even rolling on the ground and throwing dust over their heads, away towards the tombs in the hill-side beyond the town.

And from something Jesus once said it seems as if He had himself taken part in these games, and had seen in them the same play of character as in the more serious affairs of older people. There were selfish children who pouted and sulked, and there were bright and happy ones; even as He himself desired earnestly to bless men and to do the will of God, while so many of the religious and learned of His countrymen were self-conscious and jealous, and stood aloof. 'Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.'[1]

There is a budget of stories in the apocryphal Gospels of the Infancy about Jesus and His playmates. One of them is perhaps familiar to many readers from its

[1] Matt. 11, 17.

use by the poet Longfellow in 'The Golden Legend': they were playing at making birds of clay, and Jesus made His to live and fly.

All these stories are utterly fanciful. There is not a shred of evidence to support them, and they do not harmonise in the least with what we know of the character and ways of our Lord; but also they are not even in accordance with Jewish customs or ideas. Children would not try to model birds of clay, because nothing could induce a Jew to make a representation of any living thing.[1] It was regarded as forbidden in the Law[2] by the words, 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing,'[3] &c.

For this reason art made little progress among them. They showed some architectural skill, and could carve bas-reliefs, like that of the Temple vine, and engrave vases and flowers on their coins; but they had neither of the 'cheating arts'[4] of figure-painting and sculpture. The taste of

[1] Stapfer.
[2] Cf. Jos. *Antt.* 8, 7, 5.
[3] Ex. 20, 4 (*see* note in *Speaker's Commentary*).
[4] Philo.

the Greeks and Romans found no appreciation or response. They had in their midst some specimens of Western carving, such as Herod the Great's golden eagle in the Temple, and the figures of animals on the walls of Antipas' palace at Tiberias, and they abhorred them.

In music they had always been interested: it formed a prominent part of their worship. But this was chiefly at Jerusalem, in connection with the Temple services, and in a country place like Nazareth there would be very little beyond the singing and flute-playing at weddings and funerals. The fact that Herod offered prizes for music[1] shows that it was to some extent practised by Jewish people in those days, and that Herod wished to encourage its cultivation.

In some of the large centres public games, answering to our 'athletic sports,' and musical and dramatic performances had been established for the amusement of Greek and Roman residents. The Jews took no interest in such things; they were 'contrary to their customs.' Jesus would

[1] Jos. *Antt.* 15, 8, 1.

hear only of there being theatres and amphitheatres away at Tiberias and Tarichæa, at Jericho and Jerusalem.

The same may be said of dice and of other games of chance: they were known, because in vogue among the strangers from the West; but Jews took no part in them.

It would be in the sights and sounds of Nature that this Galilæan boy would find His chief pleasure. He was fond of birds; children are now, and were more so then. Even in the great towns the children of the lordly Romans had tame birds to play with, and liked them better than anything else. A sparrow, a jackdaw, a quail, even a duck, was a great delight to a girl of noble birth; she would hold it on her lap, and tease it and let it bite her finger.[1]

The country boy knew them in their freedom.

He marked where they built their nests,[2] the little owl in old buildings in the village,[3] the finches in the branches of the mustard-tree,[4] the eagle in the highest rocks.[5]

[1] Catullus 2, 1-4; Plautus, *Captivi*, act v. sc. 4, line 5.

[2] Matt. 8, 20.

[3] Ps. 102, 6.

[4] Luke 13, 9 (Tristram, *Nat. Hist. Bible*, p. 473).

[5] Jer. 49, 16.

He saw how the blue thrush sat alone upon the housetop,[1] how the small birds swooped down upon the seed which, as the farmer sowed, fell on the footpath through the field,[2] and how the heavenly Father fed the glossy black ravens and the rock-pigeons, although, unlike men, 'they sowed not nor reaped, nor gathered into barns.'[3] These last are His words when a man, but the keen observation and the naïve expression are those of childhood; the older mind takes such differences for granted, and either fails to notice them or gives them no second thought.

He knew the sound of the whooping or trumpeting of the crane, heard in the stillness of the night,[4] the plaintive cooing of the dove,[5] the hooting of the screech-owl,[6] the cry as of pain of the swallows, appearing suddenly in thousands in the spring, the soft twittering of the sparrows.

The greed of the eagle and vulture gathered to feast on the bodies of the dead,[7]

[1] Ps. 102, 7.
[2] Mark 4 4.
[3] Matt. 6, 26.
[4] Isa. 38, 14.
[5] Isa. 38, 14; 59, 11; Nah. 2, 7.
[6] Isa. 34, 14.
[7] Matt. 24, 28; Luke 17, 37.

and the gentle innocence of the dove,[1] were alike familiar to Him.

He saw men chasing the partridge with throw-sticks on the hills,[2] or enticing them by means of a decoy,[3] or finding their nests and taking the eggs away.[4] He noticed that they protected the vulture, the common scavenger of the country.

And there was a passage in the Law which forbade the fowler or the sportsman to destroy birds wholesale, or to inflict unnecessary cruelty upon them. 'If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young: thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, but the young thou mayest take unto thyself; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.'[5] And we may be sure that the child who was one day to declare that 'not one sparrow falleth to the ground but your heavenly Father knoweth it' kept

[1] Matt. 10, 16.
[2] 1 Sam. 26, 20.
[3] Ecclus. 11, 30.
[4] Jer. 17, 11.
[5] Deut. 22, 6, 7.

more than the letter of that Law, and was never cruel to any creature that God had made.

Nay, He even entered into their feelings. The tender solicitude of the mother-hen over her brood appealed to Him, and in after years He likened to it His own earnest love for men.

'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!'[1]

There were dogs in plenty in Nazareth, but they were not so well cared for as our dogs are in England now, and were not such faithful and affectionate creatures. Many of them were wild, belonging to no one in particular, and wandering about the streets and fields devouring any offal they could find. They were regarded as unclean animals. A man could not show greater scorn of another than by calling him 'a dog.' 'Am I a dog,' said the giant to his bold young adversary, 'that thou comest

[1] Matt. 23, 37.

to me with staves?'[1] 'What is thy servant, which is but a dog,' said Hazael, conscious of his meanness, 'that he should do this great thing?'[2]

Jesus shared, so far as His gentle nature would let Him, the Jewish dislike of them. 'Give not that which is holy to the dogs,' He said. When He told the story of the beggar Lazarus who lay at the rich man's gate, He meant it for a touch of deep degradation that 'the dogs came and licked his sores.' He thought it improper that the children's bread should be given to dogs. And yet He was too tender-hearted to drive them away. Even they, as the Canaanitish woman argued, and He agreed, might pick up the crumbs that the children dropped as they sat at table.

And there were some superior dogs who could watch the house and bark at an intruder,[3] or who were set to guard a flock of sheep.[4]

There were wilder animals about Nazareth, whose traces at least He saw; for sometimes the vines that grew on the

[1] 1 Sam. 17, 43.
[2] 2 Kings 8, 13.
[3] Isa. 56, 10.
[4] Job 30, 1.

sunny slopes around the village were trampled and the tender shoots eaten off, and the husbandmen would tell Him that it was little foxes that had done it. Cunning creatures they were, mischievous and sly, and hard to catch. He was reminded of them afterwards when He realised that there were human beings who cared not what harm they did to others in the gratification of their own desires, and wore the smile of friendship all the while. He spoke of Herod as 'that fox.'[1] Yet the foxes were creatures of God's making; and He tracked them to their holes, and saw that even they were not without a home.[2]

Wolves, too, were not unknown, fierce beasts that prowled by night, and that the peasants feared. They would attack a flock of sheep, and if the shepherd were a hireling, and cared more for his skin than for his duty, he would run away; but one who loved the sheep would face the intruder and fight him, even though it should cost his life. There was many a good shepherd on those Galilæan hills who knew each ram and

[1] Luke 13, 32. [2] Matt. 8, 20.

ewe in his flock, and to whose cluck the whole flock would come running up, and follow him whithersoever he should lead—perhaps to a stream of water, or perhaps to make them lie down in green pastures, or perhaps to put them within the stone walls and thorn hedge of the fold for the night, and to keep watch under the stars lest wild beasts should assail them or a robber climb over the wall to take them. And the little lambs, with their trustful ways, Jesus would notice how gentle the shepherd was with them, taking them up in his arms with kindness, with sadness too, as he thought that soon, perhaps, the little innocents might be taken away to be slain and offered up in the Temple, a token of sin repented of and forgiven.

And the dark-skinned goats were pastured with the sheep, browsing on the coarser herbage that the sheep passed by, journeying beside them in the day, and lying down near them, but apart, at night.

Even in the cold weather the shepherds stayed with the flock in the grassy plains of Esdraelon below, and, as the spring advanced, led them higher up to the hill

slopes about and above the village, where the air was cooler, though the pasturage was scanty, and the barren rocks showed out here and there among green herbage lit with flowers.

It was a pretty place, Nazareth, in the sweet spring-time, and the character of the boy would be unconsciously moulded by its quiet beauty, for His eyes and ears were open to all the sights and sounds of Nature. Having eyes, He saw; having ears, He heard. And all things spoke to Him of God. The sun rising bright and warm upon the evil and the good ;[1] the cloud rising out of the west, which told Him that a shower was coming ;[2] the sky red in the evening, that meant fair weather; the sky red in the morning, that meant foul weather ;[3] the rain falling alike on the just and on the unjust ;[4] the little rills that with heavy showers became torrent streams, sweeping all before them ;[5] the wind He heard, but could not tell whence it came nor whither it went,[6] which shook the reeds,[7] and beat upon the ill-founded

[1] Matt. 5, 45.
[2] Luke 12, 54.
[3] Matt. 16, 3.
[4] Matt. 5, 45.
[5] Matt. 7, 27.
[6] John 3, 8.
[7] Matt. 11, 7.

house;[1] the grass to-day fresh and green, pleasant to sit upon,[2] to-morrow dried up by the sun, and plucked to burn in the baking-oven;[3] the corn white unto the harvest;[4] the vines, pruned to bear finer fruit;[5] the fig-tree with its spreading branches;[6] the tares among the wheat;[7] the mustard plant that grew to be so strong[8]—He knew and pondered over and learned something from them all.

[1] Matt. 7, 27.
[2] Matt. 14, 19.
[3] Matt. 6, 30.
[4] John 4, 35.
[5] John 15, 2.
[6] John 1, 48.
[7] Matt. 13, 26.
[8] Matt. 13, 31.

CHAPTER VII

FOOD

Since the life of the Galilæan villagers was spent so much in the open air, their indoor habits were of the simplest. We have already seen how humble and poorly furnished was the dwelling. The whole style of living corresponded.

The food was plain. Bread was the 'staff' of life.[1] It was made of barley (only rich folk used wheat) kneaded in a trough, raised with leaven, and made up into very small round or oval cakes. The oven consisted merely of three stones set up to hold a fire of charcoal between them; the bread was baked on the embers. It was not meant to be cut with a knife, but to be broken with the hands. They did bake biscuits also, of fine flour with oil and no leaven, but chiefly for Temple offerings, and

[1] Lev. 26, 26; Ps. 105, 16; Ezek. 4, 16; 14, 13.

not for ordinary use.[1] Sometimes they had pancakes, fried, of flour and honey, and biscuits pierced like ours with tiny holes.

And they also ate green corn, just as they plucked it from the stalks, rubbing it in their hands to separate the grains from the husks.[2] Or, again, they parched it in a pan over the fire.[3]

A good deal of honey used to be found then, where the wild bees made their comb in trees or rocks: there is none now. Children were fed on it, and on curdled milk. When grown people made that their diet, it was of necessity, or because they were poor. So Isaiah said of Immanuel, 'Milk-curd and honey shall He eat, [even] when He knoweth to refuse the evil and choose the good.'[4]

Milk, as one of several articles of diet, was of course in common use, either fresh,[5] or more often sour. The latter is what the Authorised Version calls 'butter.'[6]

[1] Lev. 2, 14, 16.

[2] Matt. 12, 1; Luke 6, 1; Lev. 23, 14; 2 Kings 4, 42.

[3] Lev. 23, 14; Ruth 2, 14; 1 Sam. 17, 17; 25, 18; 2 Sam. 17, 28.

[4] Isa. 7, 15 (Rev. Ver.; *see* Cheyne's note).

[5] Gen. 18, 8.

[6] Gen. 18, 8; Judg. 5, 25 2 Sam. 17, 29.

With the bread a relish of some sort was eaten, either salt,[1] or the common sour wine, the 'vinegar,' of the country,[2] or gravy, if there were any.[3]

Dried fruits also formed part of the ordinary diet—raisins and fig-cake.

Vegetables were not so common; lentils and beans were the ordinary ones. Leeks, onions, and garlick were looked upon as delicacies.

Fish was consumed in the towns and villages by the Lake of Tiberias, and much was exported, and there was a special market for its sale at Jerusalem; but it did not find its way in any quantity to Nazareth, and Jesus would begin to use it only after He had left home.

It was very seldom that He would taste meat, either as boy or man. The hot climate made a flesh diet unwholesome, and also expensive, for a whole animal had to be eaten at once—it would not keep. Calves, lambs, oxen, kids, deer, and birds were killed, but for honoured guests, or at special festivals. Royal households alone in the East had meat every day.

[1] Job 6, 6. [2] Ruth 2, 14. [3] Judg. 6, 19.

One curious article of food was locusts. There were many varieties of them, and four such were considered wholesome. Sometimes they were roasted and eaten with salt, tasting rather like lobsters; or, more commonly, the head and feet were pinched off, and the bodies dried in the sun, ground into a powder, and then mixed with flour and made into bread. This bread was slightly bitter, and was eaten with camel's milk or honey. Locusts and honey were what the Baptist, Jesus' cousin, lived on.

The drink of the poor was water. The giving of a cup of cold water, of which Jesus speaks, was, in so hot a country, an act of real kindness. Labourers in the fields often mixed vinegar or sour wine with it.

Beer, of a sort, was not unknown. Wine, or wine and water, was drunk by the rich people, and by all on special occasions. They had it at the marriage in Cana when Jesus was present. Mixed with water it played a part in the Passover feast; and Jesus made it the symbol of His own self-sacrifice ('This is my blood'). It was offered to Him, with aromatic drugs in it, when He was about to be nailed to the cross.

But it was water that He commonly drank; and it was water that He always thought of in connection with thirst and fatigue.[1]

At what times the meals were taken is not at all certain. Nor do the Jews seem to have made any difference between one meal and another, or to have had any separate names for them, until after the country had become overrun with Western arms and Western manners. The 'dine' and 'dinner' of Gen. 43, 16, and Prov. 15, 17, might just as well be rendered 'eat' and 'food.' The 'dinner'[2] and 'supper'[3] of the New Testament are Greek words, ἄριστον and δεῖπνον. We should probably be nearer the mark if we were to call them 'breakfast' and 'dinner,' and suppose that they were taken, as among the Bedouins of Palestine at the present day, the principal one after sunset, and the other about nine or ten in the morning.

We may imagine Jesus, then, sitting with the other members of the family, on

[1] Matt. 10, 42; Mark 9, 41; John 4, 10, 11.

[2] Matt. 22, 4; Luke 11, 38; 14, 12.

[3] Matt. 23, 6; Mark 6, 21; Luke 14, 12, 16; John 12, 2; 13, 24; 21, 20.

the floor, round a stool on which was placed a dish containing the relish, whatever it might be—perhaps curds, or sour wine, or wheat porridge, or more rarely a stew of meat—and dipping His thin cake of bread into it to eat.

Tables and tablecloths, chairs, spoons, knives, forks, glasses, plates, and all the modern equipment of the dining-room, were unknown.

Before and after the meal they washed their hands and mouths, pouring water out of the pitcher for one another. And, also before and after the meal, a grace was said by the head of the family. Jesus said this grace in after years when He fed the multitudes in the desert country, and no doubt on many another occasion. And it was sometimes His lot to dine amid more sumptuous surroundings, with couches and cushions, and servants to wait on Him. But that was not yet.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VISIT TO JERUSALEM

When a Hebrew boy showed signs of approaching manhood—and with Orientals that has always been at a very early age—he entered upon a new phase of life; for he was regarded now as a member of the congregation, and was expected to fulfil all the religious duties which attached to that position. He wore on wrist and forehead the little leathern cases called phylacteries, and said over from memory at stated times the passages of Scriptures which were written upon the rolls enclosed therein.

He fasted on the proper days, and especially on the great day of the Feast of the Atonement. He could attend the festivals at Jerusalem. And generally he was made to feel that he was now responsible himself for his obedience to the Law, and

privileged to be counted one of Jehovah's covenanted people.

It was usually at the age of twelve or thirteen that this transition from childhood to manhood took place. In later times thirteen was definitely fixed, and the new member of the congregation was entitled Bar Mizveh, or 'son of the commandment.' And though there was no regulation as to age or style when Jesus lived, yet we know that He did experience such a transition, and at about that age. 'When He was twelve years old'[1] is a landmark in the story of His career.

It is just at this point that the silence of the Gospels is broken and the one incident occurs an account of which has come down to us. 'The darkness lifts for a moment, and the light breaks upon a boyish figure and character. He is seen in His Father's house. The act is typical. It is the Epiphany of the Divine Boyhood.'[2]

Joseph was going up, as a good Jew, to Jerusalem to the Feast of the Passover, and Mary with him. Women were not bound to go, but many did. And now for the first

[1] Luke 2, 42. [2] Vallings.

time, being twelve years of age, Jesus accompanied them. It was to Him a momentous occasion. The first journey to the place which God had chosen to set His name there, the centre during so many generations of all the affections and hopes of His countrymen, must have had the most intense interest for the young Jew, just passing from the school, where He had learned the history and the thoughts of Israel, to the world, in which He was to exercise the duties and privileges of manhood as a member of the nation.

It was a great event to everyone this yearly festival of the Passover. Multitudes flocked to Jerusalem from all countries where any Jews lived. Jerusalem was in those days twice as large as it is now, and had a population of about 200,000,[1] which became for the Passover-week between two and three millions.[2]

The chief roads through the country, from Damascus, from the Phœnician ports, from Joppa, and across the desert from the south, to the metropolis, were thronged with bands of travellers, hailing from the

[1] Eders. 116. [2] Jos. *Bell. Jud.* 6, 9, 3.

far East, from the provinces of Asia Minor, from Egypt and Arabia, and even from Rome itself. Some rode on camels or mules, some marched afoot.

Booths of mats and leafy branches were put up to shelter them when they rested.

Flocks of lambs also, and he-goats, were on the road, destined for the sacrificial feast.

The party from Nazareth would join itself to other parties it fell in with on the road, till a great company were journeying on together, 'a multitude keeping holyday.'[1] As they went they sang hymns, with pipe accompaniment, and specially those psalms known as Songs of Ascents.[2]

> I was glad when they said unto me,
> Let us go unto the house of the Lord:

these words picture the start, happy and hopeful.

And in joyful anticipation they continued:

> Our feet are standing
> Within the gates, O Jerusalem;
> Jerusalem, that art builded

[1] Ps. 42, 4.

[2] Pss. 120–134. (Rev. Version. A. V. has 'Songs of Degrees').

As a city that is compact together:
Whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord,
For a testimony unto Israel,
To give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
They shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls,
And prosperity within thy palaces.

And when at last they caught sight of the Holy City shining white in the sunlight on her hills, they would shout aloud again:

I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
From whence shall my help come?
My help cometh from the Lord,
Which made heaven and earth.

Three nights they would halt and encamp, and on the fourth day would reach Jerusalem.

There was high ground on the north side, and a good view of the city. Cultivated plots of ground, with figs and olives growing, filled the intervening space, and here and there were dotted mansions of wealthier citizens.

Through orchards and gardens the pilgrims descended to the New Town, and

entered by the Damascus Gate. The streets were narrow lanes, with many shops of braziers, clothiers, butchers, and wool-dealers. Just now they were crowded with strangers making purchases, or arriving in parties, like this from Nazareth, travel-stained and weary.

Mount Zion rose high on the right hand, and the three great castles newly built for Herod, each like a huge rock cut into regular shape, standing as sentinels to guard the beautiful palace of the king.

To the left, before them, lay the spot towards which, since they had caught sight of the city, their eyes had constantly been turning—the Temple hill, with its terraces of snow-white marble and gleaming gold.

There would be no difficulty in finding a resting-place. Everyone kept open house at Passover-time. No lodgings could be let for hire. A curtain hanging before the entrance meant, 'still there is room.' A table spread was an offer of food, and the passing stranger might enter and join in the meal.

It was early summer—perhaps the most pleasant part of the year—and most of the visitors slept in the open air or under tem-

porary booths ; large parties of them camped outside the walls.

They arrived early, and would have plenty of time to wander round the city and climb the Temple steps, and perhaps to meet old friends, before the festival rites began.

The feast lasted seven days, from the 15th day of the month Nisan to the 21st.

The 14th was the 'day of preparation,' on which all leaven had to be put away. When the sun set on the thirteenth day a search was made, and every crumb collected. In the morning again they searched, and everything that had any trace of fermented grain in it was taken outside the house and burned. For the Passover was a feast of unleavened bread.

There was a thorough cleansing of vessels that might be wanted. Everyone washed himself and trimmed his hair and nails.

Fine flour had meanwhile been mixed with water and baked into thin dry biscuits. Lambs without blemish had to be got ready, and Josephus mentions as many as 256,000 being required.

With such preparations all were busily occupied until, in the afternoon, at last the

trumpets sounded from the Temple, and the feast began.

The men pressed eagerly towards the Temple, jostling one another in the narrow streets. Each carried in his arms the lamb for his household or company. The victim was examined and slaughtered in the outer court, the blood being passed up in bowls by rows of priests and poured upon the altar. Then it was prepared for food, and carried back to be roasted for the meal. Cross-shaped skewers of pomegranate wood held it together. It was roasted whole, and not a bone of it was broken.

From two to twenty persons sat down together as one family. He who was the head pronounced a benediction, cups of red wine and water mixed were drunk, hands washed, and another blessing said. Then a table was brought in, on which were set bitter herbs (endive, chicory, wild lettuce, or nettles), the unleavened cakes, a dish of sauce made of fruits and vinegar mixed into a paste, and the roasted lamb. The Head took a handful of the herbs, dipped it in the sauce, and, saying a blessing, ate a bit and passed it to the others. Meanwhile

the son of the house, or the youngest boy present (on this occasion it may well have been Jesus himself), asked in set forms of words the meaning of the feast, and in set forms the Head replied:

'This is the Passover that we eat, because God passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt.'

'We eat these bitter herbs, because the Egyptians made the lives of our fathers bitter in Egypt.'

'We eat this unleavened bread, because there was no time to raise the dough before God revealed Himself to our fathers and redeemed them; we must praise, celebrate, honour, magnify Him who did these great and wonderful things to our fathers, and brought them out of slavery into liberty, from sorrow to joy, from darkness to a great light. Therefore let us say Hallelujah! Praise the Lord.'

And all together sang aloud the first part (Pss. 113, 114) of the great Hallel or Hallelujah song:

Praise ye the Lord.
Praise, O ye servants of the Lord,
Praise ye the name of the Lord.

Who is like unto the Lord our God,
That hath His seat on high,
That humbleth Himself to behold
The things that are in heaven and in the earth?
He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
And lifteth up the needy from the dunghill;
That he may set him with princes,
Even with the princes of his people.

The hearts of these humble Galilæans would swell with pride that they were children and servants of the Most High. And the boy Jesus, how fully was the Psalm to be realised in Him, poor and needy, but a prince! The history of past deliverance was, all unknown to these poor pious souls, the prophecy of the greater blessing that He should bring who sat among them now, the youngest and lowliest of them all:

Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the God of Jacob;
Which turned the rock into a pool of water,
The flint into a fountain of waters.

After the Psalms another blessing was said. A second cup of wine and water followed, hands were washed again, and with blessings the unleavened bread was broken and passed round. In like manner the lamb was carved and eaten. Next

came a third cup, 'the cup of blessing,' and then the fourth and last. The second part of the Hallel (Pss. 115–18) was now sung:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,
But unto Thy name give glory,
For Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake.

O Israel, trust thou in the Lord:
He is their help and their shield.

I love the Lord, because He hath heard
My voice and my supplications.

Return to thy rest, O my soul,
For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

What shall I render unto the Lord
For all His benefits toward me?
I will take the cup of salvation,
And call upon the name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows unto the Lord,
Yea, in the presence of all His people.

Another short prayer and all was over.

What was not eaten of the lamb was at once burned, so that none of it should remain to be defiled.

Though it was now late, there was yet no thought of rest; and when at midnight the Temple gates opened again, the people pressed through them to present their thank-offerings of a bullock, or a lamb, or a goat,

for it was written in the Law, 'None shall appear before me empty.'[1] The animal was slain and its blood sprinkled on the altar; part of it was reserved for the priests, and the rest taken away and eaten at a sort of second feast.

The next day, the 15th Nisan, was a day of rest, and no work was done beyond the preparing of the necessary food.

On the 16th men were sent by the priests to the valley of the Kedron to cut a sheaf of barley for first-fruits. And the boy would notice what a crowd followed them, and perhaps would join in the procession with which the sheaf was carried to the Temple to be waved before God in thanksgiving: and, turning away again, would find the streets resounding with the cries of sellers of bread or parched ears from the new crop, only now, after that rite, permitted to be sold.

The days that followed had no special duties or ceremonies, and the people made of them a pleasant holiday-time. The last, the 21st, was again a day of rest, and in the evening another Passover was held for

[1] Ex. 23, 15.

any who had not been able to be present on the first day.

But by this time Jerusalem was assuming its ordinary aspect again. There was no need to stay during the whole seven days, and many of the visitors were already on their way back to their far-off homes.

During all this week the boy's mind would be keenly alive to what was passing around Him.

He would hear at dawn the three trumpet blasts from the Temple, and the bugles of the Roman garrison in the Castle of Antonia, at its north-west angle; and would find the streets already busy with people, some making their way to the Temple for the morning sacrifice, some hurrying to the outer court only, with money to change or sheep to sell, some turning in to the synagogues proper to their nationality, and some getting their stalls or shops ready for customers.

As soon as the first rays of the sun shone out all, whatever they might be doing, bent their heads for a few moments in prayer.

Here was a group of priests; here a

Pharisee, proud and solitary, with conspicuously large Tephillin bound on his forehead and his wrist; here a white-robed, spiritual-looking Essene; here a Greek merchant.

And the languages spoken were as diverse as the personalities. And as the day passed on a babel filled the ear, of bargaining, gossip, greeting, crying of wares.

Open stalls were laden with figs, raisins, bread, fish, lentils, spices, and syrups, and with carvings in wood and stone.

Artisans worked away at their trades—potters, weavers, flax-beaters—as busily as though there were neither crowd nor noise.

The tradespeople of Jerusalem reaped a rich harvest at Passover-time, and had good reason to be zealous for its observance.

Jesus would wander through the city as He chose. For He was a 'son of the Law,' and therefore quite a man, even at twelve years of age; and the Oriental youths have always been much more precocious than our Western ones—they were mature at fourteen; and He was required to attend to all the ordinary religious duties of the Jew. For this reason, and because of His earnest

religious spirit, it was the Temple and its services that above all else in Jerusalem would engage His interest and draw towards itself His willing feet.

He was constantly in the sacred precincts during this eventful week, and was surprised that anyone should expect to find Him elsewhere.[1]

The Temple hill rose abruptly out of the streets of the city. It was nearly five acres in extent. A strong outer wall surrounded what, seen from a distance, looked like a great fortress of marble and gold. Within was a succession of courts rising towards the centre, each inner one surrounded by a terrace and a flight of steps.

Passing through one of the gates in the western wall, Jesus would be in the outer court, surrounded by double colonnades, with benches here and there to rest on. On the eastern side the colonnades were called 'Solomon's Porch'; on the south, where they were triple, the 'Royal Porch.' The floor was of stones of different colours, the columns of white marble, the roof of carved cedar work. Within was the Court of the

[1] Luke 2, 49.

Gentiles, where was the market for sacrificial animals and the tables of the money-changers. It was called the Chol, or profane place, and by the Rabbis the Mount of the House. A low wall, the Soreg, formed a barrier against the further advance of any but 'clean' Jews, who passed on through openings in the wall into the inner part of the court. Fourteen steps now led up to the terrace, and thence another flight to the wall and gates of the Temple proper. The 'Beautiful' Gate on the east side admitted to the Court of the Women, called so because to women were allotted in this court two galleries; here also were the treasury and the thirteen 'trumpets,' or alms-boxes. More steps, and then the wall of the Upper Court. The entrance was through the Nicanor Gate, resplendent in Corinthian brass, where the choir and band, consisting of Levites, were placed. The Upper Court was divided by a low boundary into two, the Court of Israel and the Court of the Priests, in which last were the great altar and the laver.

Beyond the Court of Israel Jesus did not go. Steps led up from the Court of the

Priests to the Porch of the Sanctuary, adorned with many a rich present, and prominent among them a vine of solid gold. Within was the Holy Place with its Table of Shewbread and Golden Altar of Incense and Golden Candlestick, and within this again, the entrance covered by a heavy double veil, the Holy of Holies, glittering in the sun with lavish gold, entered only once a year, by the High Priest on the great Day of Atonement. Alas! it held no more the sacred ark nor the brooding cherubim. Those symbols of Jehovah's presence had been lost in the ruin that sin brought on Jerusalem six centuries ago.

And, indeed, the Temple as a whole was not the one in which Solomon, and all the kings and prophets that followed him in Israel's most glorious days, had worshipped; nor was it that which the returning exiles had reared with mingled tears of regretful memory and shouts of joy and hope. It was an almost new building, reared by Herod, and the ornamentation was still incomplete.[1]

Yet was it associated in Jesus' mind with all the wonderful story of His people.

[1] Jos. *Antt.* 20, 9, 7.

It was on this hill that sacrifices had been slain, and prayers said and psalms of thanksgiving sung, by generation after generation of His fathers ; it was still the place which the Lord their God had chosen to set His name there.

The youthful curiosity and the earnest piety of Jesus would both lead Him constantly to the Temple during this His first visit to Jerusalem, and He would quickly become familiar with the routine of its services. Very early in the morning the gates were thrown open, and the priests blew thrice on their trumpets to announce that the day's worship was shortly to begin. A watchman stood the while on the pinnacle at the south-east corner, overlooking the Kedron valley, intently watching for the dawn. This was supposed to have come directly the light was good enough for him to be able to discern the white walls of Hebron, on the hills twenty miles away to the south.

At once the word was given, ' Priests, to your ministry ! Levites, to your posts ! Israelites, take your places ! ' All who might gathered now in the Upper Court, the people without the low barrier that divided it.

A year-old lamb was slain beside the great altar, its blood caught in a bowl and sprinkled on the altar, and the carcase cut into nine pieces; a meat-offering of flour and oil and a drink-offering of wine made ready; and within the sanctuary a censer of hot coals was placed on the Altar of Incense, and incense shaken over it. Then, as the sun's first beams were seen on the distant horizon, the flesh was laid upon the altar and consumed; the meat-offering and a bread-offering from the High Priest followed, and the wine was poured out. Priests and people repeated proper prayers the while. This was the 'morning sacrifice.' The trumpets sounded forth again nine times; a choir of Levites chanted from a raised platform the psalms of the day, with instruments accompanying, and the service closed with the benediction, 'The Lord bless thee and grant thee peace.'

Just after morning prayer was the time for special offerings from individuals. It was now that Mary, twelve years before, had put into trumpet No. 3 the price of a dove to be offered for her purification, when Simeon and Anna met her and blessed her

child. Persons who had, in one way or another, contracted legal 'defilement' brought their offerings now, and were pronounced 'clean.' And some were there to make thank-offerings for special mercies vouchsafed to them.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the evening sacrifice was offered with similar routine, and at sunset prayers were said.

Between the morning and evening sacrifices the Temple Sanhedrin sat, as a court of appeal on questions of ritual or religion.

But on Sabbaths and feast-days they used to come out upon the terrace, and discourse informally to such as might gather round them.[1] The listeners sat around upon the pavement, and anyone might make remarks or ask questions. There would be many famous Rabbis present at such conferences during the Moed Katon, or minor festival-days of the Passover week. Jesus was an eager listener, and we may suppose not once only, but often. And He took part Himself in the discussions.

There was nothing phenomenal in a boy of His age doing so; Jewish boys not un-

[1] Eders. 1, 247.

commonly showed the maturity of mind that in Western races comes only with manhood. Samuel, David, Herod the Great, Hyrcanus, and Josephus are instances in point. Josephus[1] says that when he himself was about fourteen years of age the high priests and principal men of the city came frequently to him to know his opinion about points of the Law; and there is a story of how two boys sitting on the ground, on a similar occasion to this told of by St. Luke, showed such acumen in their questions and objections that the Rabbis exclaimed, 'We drink of their water' (*i.e.* wisdom) 'and they sit upon the ground!' And seats were brought in and the children put upon them.[2]

But what was phenomenal in Jesus' case was the altogether exceptional mental and spiritual insight which He showed.

'All that heard Him were amazed at His understanding and answers.'[3]

'Were amazed'—the word is the one used also of those who in after years saw Him bring a dead girl to life at a word,[4] or walk upon the waters of the lake,[5] or who heard

[1] *Vit.* 2. [2] Babha Metsia, f. 84, b. [3] Luke 2, 47.
[4] Luke 8, 56. [5] Mark 6, 51.

His disciples speaking divers tongues,[1] and bidding the lame to walk, and the palsied to rise, and the unclean spirits to be gone.[2] We can well believe that they had cause to be amazed, for this was He who, when He grew older, and Himself sat upon a high seat and taught, spoke as one having authority,[3] and His word was with power,[4] and even the servants of the Pharisees and priests could not lay hands on Him, because 'never man spake like this man.'[5]

And now His pure and earnest spirit, stimulated by the solemnities of the Temple worship and by all the religious and historic associations of the Holy City, was pressing forward into clear vision of the truth. Perhaps some light as to the mystery of His own nature and of His relation to God and to men was dawning now upon Him.

Who the doctors were on that particular day, and what the subject they discussed, we do not know. But it may well have been that matters arising out of the feast in which they were all engaged were being treated. One great Rabbi perhaps present

[1] Acts 2, 7. [2] Acts 8, 13. [3] Matt. 7, 29.
[4] Luke 4, 32. [5] John 7, 46.

now, for he was still living a few years later, had established his reputation by proving on an occasion such as this that the Passover was not unlawful on the Sabbath. This was the famous Hillel, the teacher of tolerance, who had come a poor but eager student from Babylon, and was now chief of them all. Possibly his son Simeon was there too, whom some have thought was the same that sang his 'Nunc dimittis' in the Temple just twelve years before; or even Simeon's son, Gamaliel, the 'doctor of the law had in reputation among all the people,' [1] who taught St. Paul; or that Nicodemus who afterwards came to Jesus by night, and who helped Joseph of Arimathæa to bury the body of his crucified Lord. But who they were matters not much; it is the figure of the God-given child Himself that engages our attention, as it did then the eyes and ears of those who sat around.

He seems to have both inquired as to the views of the Rabbis and to have expressed His own thoughts. The text of St. Luke speaks of His 'hearing' and 'asking

[1] Acts 5, 34.

questions,' of 'His understanding and His answers.' We may not particularise. It is unsafe to give free play to the imagination in things of which we know little. Origen[1] no doubt thought to express his reverence for his Lord when he wrote: 'He questioned the Masters, and because they could not answer, Himself answered His own questions. He questioned the Masters, not to learn anything, but to teach by His questions.' This is a fanciful picture, and not a pleasing one. It exalts His knowledge at the expense of His character. We would rather believe Him simple, genuine, eager after truth, yes, even boyish, than forward and dogmatic. His time for teaching was not yet come; He was a learner still, from all sources that were open to Him. 'He was subject,' says St. Luke, 'He grew in wisdom,'[2] and 'in favour with man'; and none of these pregnant phrases would well agree with Origen's pious conjecture.

Had He been other than modest and teachable it would not have been amaze-

[1] *In Luc. Hom.* 18, 19 954, 955.

[2] Cf. also 2, 40, 'filled' (πληρούμενον, *i.e.*, becoming gradually filled) 'with wisdom.'

ment but anger that filled the minds of those who heard Him. For they looked upon impertinence as one of the gravest of faults.[1]

There was, indeed, much for Him, the human child, to learn. Hitherto He had talked only with the unlearned Galilæan villagers, of whom the more cultured and self-conscious southern people said, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' The beauties of Nature had been about Him and had stamped their silent impress on His soul. The tender influence of home had made Him affectionate and dutiful. The simple theology He had learned from His parents' lips, in the synagogue school, and from the round of fast and festival, had moved Him to love His country and venerate His God.

Now He is confronted with the sort of religion in vogue at Jerusalem—a religion of long and repeated prayers, of minute regulation of every word and action, of rigorous tyranny—a religion of word-splitting, of separatism, of outward appearance, with too seldom any sufficient basis of intellectual conviction or spiritual feeling.

[1] Pirqey Abhoth v. 12, 15.

And He would want to know what it all meant, and how it was to be reconciled with the religion He had learned at home.

Were these directions and this casuistry among the 'things of His Father'? Did they belong to the stern righteousness of the national books? Were they steps towards the kingdom of heaven?

Sitting on the Temple terrace He would learn more than the doctors told.

Their second-hand dogmatism, their logical refinements, would show Him truth, even as out of darkness shines forth light. Their chill selfishness and proud reserve would reveal to Him love, even as cold does heat.

For wisdom is attained not by the taking in of known facts or safe opinions, but by the working of the mind on the material, bad or good, true or false, which comes within its ken.

'That conversation with miserable priests and formalists called into activity the One Creative Mind which was to fertilise the whole spiritual life to the end of time.'[1]

Joseph and Mary meanwhile, having

[1] F. W. Robertson.

spent the two necessary days in Jerusalem, on the third day of the feast began their journeying north again, thinking that Jesus also was somewhere in the company. For now that the compulsory time of attendance was over many of the people started as a matter of course for home. And with such crowds passing out of the gates, and along the great highways, it would be difficult to collect each individual member of a particular party. And Eastern boys were allowed much liberty. Joseph and Mary did not even notice that Jesus was not with them.[1]

The caravan halted for the night at El-Bireh, some nine miles north of Jerusalem, called in the Old Testament scriptures Beeroth ;[2] a large spring of water made it a suitable camping-ground.

Edersheim thinks that Sichem or Akrabah may have been the place, and Keim names Sichem and Shiloh. But Bireh is the end of the first stage for caravans going north at the present day, and tradition says it was here that Joseph and Mary stopped.

They pitched their little tent, and made a fire and got supper ready. But the boy

[1] *οὐκ ἔγνωσαν*, Luke 2, 43. [2] Josh. 9, 17 ; 18, 25.

did not come. They looked round for Him. They asked some of their fellow-travellers. They began to feel anxious. They went round to everyone they knew, everyone whom He might possibly have joined on the road. But He was not to be found.

And no one remembered having seen Him anywhere that day.

An anxious night did Joseph and Mary spend, searching, inquiring, and then through the dark hours wondering what could have become of Him.

They remembered how the great Herod had meant to take His life when He was an infant. That was years ago, and Herod was no more ; but there were jealous, cruel men in power still. Had it become known to them that the child whom the wise men sought was still alive, and had they found Him and laid hands on Him ?

The country was in an unsettled state ; some districts were infested by bands of men half-robbers, half-rebels ; could He have 'fallen among thieves' ? Or had He at the very start from Jerusalem, in the darkness of the early morning, and amid the confusion and noise of the mingled mass of

pilgrims and camels and asses, become separated altogether from the Nazareth party, and gone away, all unknowing, with a crowd of strangers on quite another road? Or was He still somewhere in the city? And what would He do when He knew that they were gone?

At any rate He was not there at El-Bireh; of that they had made quite sure. And so before the dawn of day, while everyone else was getting ready to pursue the journey northwards, these two turned back along the way by which they had come.

No sign of Him, no news of Him, upon the road. Impatient and short would be their rest during the heat of noon. But it was late in the afternoon before they neared once more the Holy City, not now in the joy of the pilgrim ascent, but in suspense and fear.

Their temporary abode was just as they had left it; He was not there. Before they could make a thorough search of the streets and buildings night closed in, and they must wait. Early they were up, looking everywhere, asking everyone, until at last in the Temple courts, on the terrace, they found Him 'sitting in the midst of the doctors,

both hearing them and asking them questions.' And when they saw Him they were astonished; for, like so many other parents, they had not realised that their boy was fast becoming a man, with thoughts and interests of His own, and His simple character and modest demeanour had not prepared them to see Him here, taking part in religious discussion, and prominent among noted Rabbis and their disciples, whom these reverent Galilæans held in so great awe.

They drew Him aside, and Mary said softly, for Him alone to hear,[1] 'Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?' 'Son' she calls Him (*τέκνον*); the word betrays something of maternal tenderness, but something, too, of her feeling that now He is indeed grown-up; a pet name would have harmonised neither with the spiritual glow upon His face, nor with the wonderment in her own heart.

And yet her question has in it a touch of reproach. His staying behind in the city affected them, His parents, and He seemed not to have thought of that. It had disquieted their minds, it had altered their

[1] *εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ*, Luke 2, 48.

arrangements, and brought them back in suspense and even grief to Jerusalem. Not Mary only, but see! here is Joseph too, saying nothing, as is his wont, but feeling deeply all the same—nay, his anxiety by Mary's delicate unselfishness put foremost: 'Behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.'

Three days of mental anguish have they been suffering on His account; how is it that He, who at home has been so thoughtful and considerate, should have caused this trouble now?

But such have been the thoughts and feelings of Jesus during these days at Jerusalem that to Him his mother's words come with a shock of surprise. He has been absorbed in the Temple ritual, in the worshipping crowds of His countrymen, and now in the discussion of religious topics; the character and will of God have become clearer to Him; an idea of a mission has perhaps been forming in His mind.

Mary's words are the intrusion of an inharmonious train of thought; and He wonders to realise that she and Joseph have felt so differently from Himself. Look-

ing for Him? Anxious about Him? Surely there was only one place where He could be, only one matter that could detain Him. 'How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house, and about my Father's business?'[1]

Could it be that they were not interested in the things of the Father, and so did not understand His being so? There is almost a sort of shudder in Jesus' reply.[2] Could He, the son of the Father, be about anything wrong? Could He, the son of the Father, come to any harm?

How true to nature these words of Jesus are! He was still scarce more than a boy; and boys do not easily see things from any point of view but their own. Older people, however strong may be their feeling or well-founded their opinion, do not expect that everyone else will think and feel in the same way as themselves. Tolerance comes with age and experience; in youth it would be unnatural.

Though surprised to learn that the thoughts of others had not been the same as His own, Jesus seems to have been con-

[1] ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Πατρός μου. [2] Godet.

scious that the things about which He was thinking were in a special way related to Himself.

'Wist ye not,' He says, 'that I must be about *my* Father's business?' He had an urgent duty, an engrossing interest, for the Father of the covenanted people of Israel was Father of Him. Every Jew, because he was a Jew, might speak of God as Father. But this 'my' makes an individual claim such as was made by no other Israelite. Indeed, when it was in later years definitely and seriously set forth, it excited their strongest indignation. 'My Father . . . is greater than all. . . . I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.'[1]

It was perhaps now and here, in the Temple courts at His first Passover, in the Holy City, and amid types of Himself, that the consciousness of His personal relation to God stole upon Him. During the quiet years of childhood it had been gathering, growing, unheeded, like the swelling bud; now it bursts open and stands revealed. And yet it shrinks away for a time into

[1] John 10, 29-31.

obscurity again, and grows stronger and more beautiful, until His hour should come, and He should declare, 'I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.' [1]

To say that Jesus was at this time fully conscious, not only of His relation to the Father, but also of His mission upon earth, would be to anticipate the course of history.

Although it is true that 'the gain of the spiritual does not weaken or destroy the natural affection,' [2] yet had the ray of light that fell now upon His personality been other than partial or temporary, He would scarcely with propriety and in complete sincerity have gone down again to His parents' home in Nazareth, to be subject unto them, and still to live and learn and grow during many silent years. Even after He began His public ministry we can in some measure trace the gradual and tide-like advance, constant, yet by marked waves of crisis, of His knowledge of Himself.

And so we must not press too much of meaning into the words, 'Wist ye not that I must be in the things of my Father?'

[1] John 9, 4. [2] S. A. Brooke.

About His Father's business in any special or Messianic sense it was not yet His time to be. Nor did it ever become His duty to abide always in His Father's house: our High Priest ministers in a temple not made with hands.[1]

No; the plain meaning of the boy's answer to His mother's 'Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?' is that He wondered that they should have had to think twice about where He would be and what He was doing; did they not know that He must be in the Temple because it was the Father's house, and that He must be engrossed in the Temple rites, and in the discussions on the terrace, because they had to do with the worship of the Father and with His will.

And when to this we have added that He called Him 'my' Father, and so showed that He was becoming conscious of some special and personal relation, we have said as much as we safely may.

At present His idea of the worship and service of God was perhaps localised, within the Temple walls; it was after years of communion with Him, in Nature and in men

[1] Heb. 9, 11.

and in His own soul, that He came to speak of God as in the sun and rain and birds and grass,[1] of praying and giving alms as sometimes best done in secret,[2] of Jerusalem as no longer the holy city, the joy of the whole earth, but as a place of killing the prophets and stoning them that were sent, a house left desolate, trodden down of the Gentiles.[3] The hour should be when neither on Gerizim nor on Moriah should men worship the Father, but the true worshippers should worship Him in spirit and in truth.[4]

This conversation seems to have taken place aside from the crowd, or in an undertone.[5] It was probably reported to St. Luke in after years by Mary herself. At the time neither she nor Joseph took in its full significance: 'they understood not the saying which He spake unto them.' How could they? They had not before them then, as we have now, the story of His life and death; His discourses to men, His prayers to the Father, were in the future; to them He was

[1] Matt. 5, 45; 6, 26, 28, 30, &c.
[2] Matt. 6, 1-6.
[3] Luke 13, 34, 35; 21, 24.
[4] John 4, 21-24.
[5] Vv. 48, 49, *πρὸς αὐτόν* *πρὸς αὐτούς*.

still their child, happy and content in the simple occupations of home, obedient and affectionate to themselves.

It was best so: had they known then all that afterwards was seen to be implied in that pregnant phrase, 'I must be in the things of my Father,' nay, had He himself known its whole meaning, the ordinary life of the home would have been no longer possible, parental love and care would have been replaced by timid awe and lowly worship, filial respect by a divine condescension, and Jesus could not have received the natural human training which was, for Him who was 'very man,' essential. Many years were yet to pass before that training should be complete, and He be ready to go out from home to preach the kingdom of heaven.

'They understood not.' So soon, in His very boyhood, are we face to face with one of the most impressive aspects of the mission of the Christ upon earth. For Him was there no brilliant and immediate success: His words were seed cast forth upon the world of human hearts, to be snatched away or trodden under foot or choked, or at the best to settle and die, and only thus to bring

forth fruit. He told His simple stories, and people 'understood not what things they were which He spake unto them.'[1] His very disciples, when He begged them to let His words sink into their ears, for He himself should be delivered up into the hands of men, understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them.[2] He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

He lived not for time, but for eternity. He could afford to wait.

And so now, on the threshold of His manhood, and all unknowing as yet of the travail and the triumph that were to be, He went down, in the order of God's wise providence, from the city in which all the patriotic and religious sentiment of His nation were centred, and which was to be the scene of His own abasement and exaltation—went down with Mary and Joseph, His parents, along the road they had travelled a week ago, then with pleasant anticipation, now with serious and puzzled

[1] John 10, 6. [2] Luke 9, 44, 45.

thoughts, until they came to Nazareth once more, and climbed the steep path up from the plain, and greeted their neighbours at the well, and so got home to their humble dwelling and their ordinary life.

CHAPTER IX

FURTHER EDUCATION

Of the next eighteen years there is no incident recorded in the Gospels. We may suppose, therefore, that nothing uncommon occurred, and that the life of Jesus was in its outward details that of other Jews of His age and position.

But St. Luke does tell us what were the characteristic features of the earlier part at least of this period. His words are very suggestive, and taken along with what we may be able to ascertain as to the habits and pursuits of young men in Galilæan villages, and with what we know of our Lord's character and sayings in maturer life, will enable us to do much towards filling this gap in the history. '(He went down with them, and came to Nazareth); and He was subject unto them: (and His

mother kept all these sayings in her heart). And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.'[1]

The entire subjection of the child to the parents was in accordance with the scriptures and the customs of the Jews.

Parents were the representatives of God, and honour must be paid to them.[2] He that should smite, or even curse, his father or his mother was to be put to death:[3] it was a crime of rare occurrence. Children loved and respected their parents, and any contrary feeling would have been regarded as unnatural and horrible. Submission was an essential part of a graceful and pleasing character. 'My son,' said the wise man, 'hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.'[4]

Chastisement was thought necessary,[5] but only for the very young, and not so as to destroy the child's self-respect. Jewish parents were advised in the Talmud,[6] as

[1] Luke 2, 51, 52.
[2] Ex. 20, 12.
[3] Ex. 21, 15, 17; Lev. 20, 9.
[4] Prov. 1, 8, 9.
[5] Prov. 13, 24; 29, 15, 17.
[6] Moed K. 17, a.

were Christians by St. Paul,[1] not to provoke their children to wrath. Correction was, indeed, a mark of love.[2] While in the Roman State the salient feature of family relationship was the *patria potestas*—the father's absolute power—in the Jewish it was rather his obligation to contribute by his offspring to the character and strength of the nation.

Jesus would be brought up to be dutiful, and to obey. Nor did the exceptional greatness of His spirit clash with the just claims of filial piety. Rather His piety was an essential part of His greatness. He was a born genius; He had already won favour among His friends, and had been noticed even in the Temple courts; most boys in such a case would have chafed at the restraints of home, and would have become self-conscious and conceited. The instinct of reverence and duty kept Him in the right way. 'He that ruleth his spirit (is better) than he that taketh a city': [3] the proverb was a prophecy.

Not during the simplicity of childhood alone, but in the strength of maturity, with

[1] Eph. 6, 4. [2] Prov. 3, 11, 12. [3] Prov. 16, 32.

His powers of body and mind at their best, and a spiritual superiority of which He could not but have been conscious, His career was marked by a frank and willing submission to lawful authority.

Though John would have hindered Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?' He answered, 'Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.'[1] So, too, He paid the Temple tax 'lest we cause them to stumble';[2] and told His questioners to 'render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.'[3]

He bade men listen to the authorised teachers, selfish and tyrannical though they were. 'The Scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe.'[4]

He allowed Himself to be taken prisoner in Gethsemane by the band of soldiers and officials, and when Peter would have fought in His defence, He said, 'Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'[5] He

[1] Matt. 3, 14, 15. [2] Matt. 17, 27. [3] Matt. 22, 21.
[4] Matt. 23, 3. [5] John 18, 11

bore with patience the questions put, and the accusations and indignities heaped upon Him, in the courts of High Priest and Sanhedrin and Roman Governor. He submitted to be bound and scourged, and crowned with thorns, and arrayed in robes of mockery, and buffeted, and led forth to die a cruel death. He was not willing to rebel against the administration of the law, even though its administrators were cowardly and unjust.

He was great by very reason of His being submissive. His cross was His crown. 'He made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore also God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name.' [1]

Since, then, submission to authority was in His later life seen to be not inconsistent with, but rather a mark of, His nobility and dignity of soul, it is easy to understand how in childhood, though greater than

[1] Phil. 2, 7-9.

His parents, He was yet 'subject unto them.'

The use in His parables and discourses of the word 'Father' gives us a hint as to the happy relations that existed in the home at Nazareth.

That He should have commonly spoken of God by that name is the strongest testimony to the good influences that were about him in His early years. There was authority without harshness, wisdom rounded by love. He could scarcely have grown up so joyous in His disposition, so original in His thoughts and sincere in the expression of them, had there not been a wholesome elasticity in the discipline of the early home.

The submission of Jesus to His parents is one of the many tokens of His real humanity.

And another is found in the next expression which St. Luke uses about him.[1]

'And Jesus increased' (Revised Version 'advanced,' Greek προέκοπτε). The word is one that pictures pioneers making their way through rough country or forest land, cutting down trees and undergrowth, leaving as

[1] Luke, 2, 52.

they go a path for those who follow. It implies patience: He did not burst at once into the fulness of His powers; body, brain, and character, by steady gradual development, became what they were destined to be.

He slept and rose night and day, and the seed sprang up and grew, He knew not how.[1]

Life was to Him as it should be to us all, a continual lesson. And His progress was not merely physical and mental, but moral and spiritual also. He 'increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.' 'Though he were a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.'[2]

In the quiet home-life of Nazareth Jesus 'waxed strong in spirit,' as did John, His forerunner, who was 'in the deserts till the day of His showing unto Israel.' The fire of youthful ardour, too much fanned, is apt to burn itself away. A premature publicity might have exposed Him too early to the temptations of fame and flattery, which, after thirty years of steady growth, He met and put aside.

[1] Mark 4, 26, 27. [2] Heb. 5, 8.

He grew, not as the hothouse plant that shoots up quickly to its perfection, but as the modest wild flower that takes root firmly in some shaded hollow, and lifts a tiny shoot slowly from the soil, and braces itself against the buffets of the wind, and endures the plashing rain and the chills of night, and only then, when it is well-formed and strong, opens its petals to the sunshine, and reveals its beauty to all eyes, and makes the air sweet with its perfume.

The conception of Christ's natural development as a child, and His lowliness of heart as a man, which we get from St. Luke's pregnant words, and from the general tenor of all four canonical gospels, does not agree in the least with the portrait of Him which the writers of the apocryphal gospels tried to draw. Zeal to assert the Lord's divinity, united with the vulgar idea that divinity must be shown in uncommon phenomena rather than in the ordinary ways of God's world, and in the physical rather than the moral and religious sphere, led them to give the reins to a wild imagination.

What is presented to their readers is a

seeming child who is already a man, who knows no development, who can learn nothing from teachers or from experience. Wonders attend Him from His cradle onwards. He raises the dead, and gives life to things of clay; He enters a lions' den and is worshipped of them; Jordan divides as He draws near; He drives out a dog-devil from Judas Iscariot; from one grain of wheat he raises a thousand bushels; He lengthens in an instant a bedstead and alters a throne that Joseph had made; He throws a dyer's clothes into blue water, and draws them out dyed each its proper colour; He changes His playmates into goats; He strikes dead with a word those who do not honour Him.

His position in the home and the school is that which His finished life and work alone would warrant. It is He who speaks the blessings; they will not eat unless He eats, or begin a meal without Him. They see a glory shining ever about Him, and pay Him reverence. In the Gospel of Thomas Joseph does attempt discipline, and is rebuked with 'Thou hast not done wisely, grieve me not'; but in that of Matthew

he leaves the duty to Mary, who addresses the boy as 'My Lord.'

His teachers are one after the other scorned and put to shame.

Those who wish to read such fancies at length will find a translation and a critical account of them in B. Harris Cowper's 'Apocryphal Gospels' (London, 1870).

For any purposes of history or religious faith these books are quite worthless. They are interesting only as specimens of the foolish things that men will write who for faith's sake abjure reason, and in the name of religion try to make unto themselves a God after their own heart. God's facts make better theology than do man's fancies.

There would be no more actual schooling for Jesus after he became a 'son of the commandment.' He would have now to observe the Law that He had learned; to wear the phylacteries in prayer, to keep the proper fasts, and to attend with the men the great festivals at Jerusalem.

Some youths at the age of fifteen became students at academies conducted by well-known Rabbis in Jerusalem, where those things were taught which afterwards became

the written Gemara or Talmud, and the art of debating was practised. King Izates of Adiabene sent his five sons to such a Beth Midrash, or house of instruction. Gamaliel had one, and Saul of Tarsus sat at his feet. The instance of Hillel, who listened outside the door, when he could not afford to pay the fee, shows that even poor lads sometimes came up for this purpose.

But we know that Jesus stayed at Nazareth with His parents. The people of His own part of the country, when they heard Him teach in the synagogue, were astonished, and said, 'Whence hath this man this wisdom?'[1] And when He taught in the Temple courts, the Jews marvelled, saying, 'How knoweth this man letters, never having learned?'[2] *i.e.* How can he discuss with Scribes when He has never set foot in their schools?

His parents were poor, and also, being Galilæans, showed the northern distaste for the theological refinements in vogue at Jerusalem; and either of these facts would account for His not being sent to attend a Rabbinic school. It was well for Him that

[1] Matt. 13, 54; Mark, 6, 2. [2] John 7, 15.

He was not. He could scarcely have been so fresh and independent in His way of thinking had He been subjected to the cramping influence of the teaching of the Rabbis, the effect of which is traceable in the best men of the age, and even, some have thought, in St. Paul himself.

Yet it is clear that He was familiar with their methods, and with many of their actual sayings. A medium by which these could filter through to Him would be the discourses which He listened to in the synagogue of his own village. Frequently in the course of His after-teaching did He quote from Scribes, in order to contrast with their dicta some sounder and more spiritual truth.

But it is interesting to notice that, when He does so, He does not mention, as most Jews would have done, the name of the author of the saying. To Jesus a sentiment was true or false of itself, and not because of the person who uttered it.

Some such quotations are preserved in the Gospels, and no doubt there were many similar ones which are not recorded.[1]

[1] John 21, 25.

'Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time,' 'Ye have heard that it hath been said,' are the phrases with which He introduces Rabbinic sayings: and 'But I say unto you' is the preface to His own comment.[1] The discourses in Matthew 15 and 23 show an intimate acquaintance with the views of contemporary Jewish teachers. What He said about giving tribute to Cæsar implies that He was acquainted with the nationalist propaganda of patriots like Judas the Galilæan.[2]

It is reasonable to suppose that He learned all these things while He was still a youth at Nazareth, before the busy days began of His public ministry. He was not a student in the schools of the Sopherim; but an earnest and intelligent spirit does more for the acquisition of knowledge than the most favourable external conditions.

His attendance at the Nazareth synagogue, where He would sometimes hear teachers from the south, and His visits to Jerusalem for the great festivals, would provide material enough to His inquiring and reflective disposition. It may be added

[1] Matt. 5, 21, 27, 33, 38, 43. [2] Matt. 22, 17-21.

that His sociable nature would make the community in which He lived a school for Himself, and that, being a true Oriental, He would spend a great deal of time in reverie.

But, by whatever means He gained His knowledge, it is evident that when Jesus went forth from Nazareth to fulfil His mission in the larger world He not only knew thoroughly the history of Judaism in the past—its rise, its Law and other Scriptures, its reverses and its glories—but understood well the actual condition of the Judaism of the present.

Let us try to form an idea of what this was.

The period of prophetic inspiration had passed away. The popular ideal of the Messiah was no longer the Scriptural one. The hereditary priesthood had become secular in tone.

Religious influence in the nation belonged now to Rabbinism.

Under the early kings a Scribe was a sort of Secretary of State. In Hezekiah's reign a number of men were employed to copy records and write down traditions. During

the Captivity it was an important matter that the sacred writings should be preserved and explained, especially as the language was changing from Hebrew to Aramaic. Ezra the priest was known as 'Ezra the Scribe.' 'To seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments,'[1] became the work of a rising class. It is to them that we owe our possession to-day of the Old Testament Scriptures.

As varying circumstances required fresh advice, or special decisions, these were made as on the authority of the Law. A system of casuistry, the 'Words of the Scribes,' began, as being more modern, to take the place of the written precepts. They were to be a 'hedge' around the 'enclosed garden' of the Law, to prevent in whatever case any breach of it.

They were quoted as authoritative. They were of two kinds :—

First, Halakhah, or 'goings' ('the rule of the spiritual road'),[2] directions as to conduct and observances, which were legal ordinances, later and greater than those in the Scriptures.

[1] Ezra 7, 10. [2] Edersheim.

Second, Haggadah, or 'sayings,' which, though not so binding as the Halakhah, were all there was of what may be called theology; and silly stuff on the whole it was, legendary, coarse, and irreverent.

It was not till long after Christ that the words of the Scribes began to be collected in book form. The Mishnah, or second Law, dates from the end of the second century.

Comments on the Mishnah in turn were made into the Jerusalem Talmud about 400 A.D., and the Babylon Talmud about 500 A.D. For Babylon had been a great centre of Jews and Judaism in the past, and was so again after the fall of Jerusalem.

In Jesus' time the Scribes were very highly honoured: they were the official teachers of the national religion, the authority on all matters of faith and practice. Some of their body were associated with the 'chief priests' and with 'elders' in the Sanhedrin, which sat in the Temple precincts as the great judicial and administrative court of Judaism. 'Lawyers,' they sometimes were, and 'doctors of the law.' [1]

They were thick in Judæa, and were to

[1] Matt. 22, 35 (cf. Mark 12, 28); Luke, 5, 17; &c.

be seen also in Galilee. Much deference was paid to them: they were addressed as Rabbi or 'my master'; everyone made way for them, and listened to what they would say. The priestly body who controlled the Temple services and its vast revenues, and filled the highest offices in the nation, were yet in popular estimation inferior to the Rabbis, and were glad on occasion to respect their views in order to gain their support.

For the test of merit was the study of the Law. This it was that marked off the pious man from the Amhaarets or 'country fellow.' The Patriarchs had learned and kept the ordinances. In the study of the Law Jehovah himself was supposed to be occupied.

Scribes often appear in the Gospels along with Pharisees. The latter were the members of the religious party which practised the observances laid down by the former. Indeed, a Scribe was usually, though not of necessity, a strict Pharisee. The Pharisees were professional pietists: the details of their art being studied, settled, and taught by the Scribes.

Very minute were the directions they had to follow, and which were regarded as of utmost importance. Every possible bearing of the Mosaic Law had been considered and dealt with.

If only a man conformed to that Law, or rather to the Halakhah upon it, he might think and say very much what he pleased. Religion stood in externals. Intelligence and faith, and love of God and of man, were not included.

Two objects were kept in view: the careful observance of Levitical purity, and the strict payment of religious dues.

He who undertook the latter obligation only was a Neeman, an accredited one, and might be traded with. He who undertook both was a Chabher, or full associate.

What the doctors taught, and the people believed, with regard to the Messiah was that He would free Israel by might in arms, break the power of the nations and divide to Israel their treasures, and found a universal kingdom, with a splendid metropolis, and a people all strong in body, and in soul all prophets.

A special, but small, religious party was that of the Sadducees. They represented a reaction against what was irrational in Pharisaism, a reaction that tended to become rationalistic itself. They did not reject the authority of tradition, but protested against the extreme use made of it. They disbelieved in, or at any rate denied that there was in the Law any proof of, the life after death. They seem to have believed more in man's free will, and less in predestination, than did the Pharisees. There were some differences also as to details of ritual.

It was only a rather small number of people, and they of the highest, the priestly, class, who were Sadducees. Pharisaism was the religion of the masses, and the Scribes were their teachers.

Pharisees and Sadducees were parties within the synagogue. Outside it was a sect, the Essenes, 'outsiders,' numbering about 4,000 men, who attracted some notice by their unworldliness and self-denial. Their ideal was purity, as consisting in separation from material things.

They lived under rigid rule, celibates,

having all things in common. Their largest settlement was at Engaddi, on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, but in the towns also some of them were to be found, who had not taken the full vows, and were a sort of secular clergy.

Their doctrines were mystical, and were kept a secret within the order.

In the period of the Herods another party arose, who longed for national freedom. They would call no man their lord; Jehovah alone was to be lord. Zealots (or in Hebrew Cananæans) was their name, and in Galilee their home. Ezekias, the first leader of their guerilla bands, was put to death by Herod the Great, and Judas his son suffered in the same cause while Jesus was a child.

The leading Rabbis, awed by Herod's severity, gave them neither sympathy nor support; the interest of the Hillelites at any rate lay rather in the subtleties of the Law than in political enterprise; but the school of Shammai contributed a few comrades to their ranks. Jesus' brother Simon was a Zealot. Possibly James also had some leanings in that direction; his tone is that of Shammai rather than of Hillel.

It may be said that all parties in Judaism, even though abstaining from hopeless agitation, were intensely national in feeling. Only in the Temple could the Shekhinah dwell. Palestine was 'the land'; and it was so because it was the abode of Israel. The 'children of Abraham' held the same relation to God as the great patriarch himself. For them was the world created.

The lesson of their past history, and especially of the Captivity, had been burned deep into the Jewish spirit. Never again should there be for them any friendship with heathens.

Roman writers noted this characteristic. Tacitus charges them with 'bitter hatred towards all aliens.'[1]

Juvenal speaks of—

All that which Moses in his mystic volume handed down,
To show the way to none but fellow-worshippers,
To guide none but the circumcised to the stream they seek.[2]

And although it was, in the condition of the country—subject to Rome, and trading

[1] Tac. *Hist.* 5, 5.

[2] Juv. *Sat.* 14, 103, Strong and Leeper's translation.

with Phœnicians and Greeks—impossible to maintain a real abstention from Western affairs, yet such was their ideal and their profession. It was a virtue to be ignorant of everything not Jewish.

Another religious movement, within the pale of Judaism, was meanwhile germinating, which was destined to influence all parties, and to be the precursor of a purer and fuller revelation in Christianity itself. No doubt Jesus heard of the life that His kinsman, the son of Zacharias, was leading in the wilderness south of Jericho. Self-discipline, and study of the prophets, and solitude with God, were making the future Baptist strong in spirit, and fitting him to 'go before the face of the Lord to make ready His ways.' Jesus seems not to have known John personally yet,[1] but it counted for something to know of the earnest faith in Jehovah, and the eager expectancy of a coming Messiah, in one who was so nearly connected with His mother and Himself.

So far our account of Jesus' education has been all religious. It has been so of necessity. No other learning was there for

[1] John 1, 31.

the Jew but in theology—the Hebrew Scriptures and the current sayings of their interpreters. He could graduate neither in arts nor sciences.

Mathematics were unknown ; there is no indication even of anything like arithmetic in the Bible. We do find allusions to the habits of various animals, but the only approach to classification is that some are domesticated or 'cattle,' and others wild or 'beasts of the field,' and that some—those that chew the cud and have divided hoofs—are regarded as clean and fit for food, and all the rest as unclean : there is nothing worthy of being called zoology. And though references are made to the parts of the body, and diseases are mentioned, there was no systematised physiology or anatomy or pathology. Indeed science was heathen, and to be abhorred.

And the same may be said of foreign literature—it was forbidden.[1]

So Jesus, we may suppose, never read those books which, written four hundred years before His time, are still to-day masterpieces in the world's literature : the

[1] Sanhedrin, 90.

epic poems of Homer; the gossipy chronicles of Herodotus, the 'father of history'; the more studied and philosophic compositions of Thucydides; the conversations and discourses of that brave and earnest truth-seeker, Socrates, as preserved by Xenophon and Plato, his disciples.

The soul-stirring plays of the Greek dramatists, the graceful verses of Virgil and Horace, His contemporaries, were, so far as we can tell, unknown to Him.

There is not, in what has come down to us of His teaching, any allusion to the history or the literature of either Greece or Rome.

It may be that of the Grecian tongue He was not ignorant.

A Galilæan would at any rate be more likely to know something of it than an inhabitant of Judæa; for some of the routes by which commerce passed between East and West lay across the province of Galilee.

Jesus did speak with certain Greeks who came up to worship at the feast,[1] with the centurion whose servant He healed,[2] and with Pilate the Roman Governor:[3] He would

[1] John 12, 20-26. [2] Matt. 8, 6-9. [3] Matt. 27, 11.

do so the more easily if He understood the language which was at that time the ordinary one of travellers, of officials, and of courtiers.

The fact that He knew the value and meaning of certain Greek coins is of no significance in this respect, for those coins had been current in the country for years, and were well known by everybody.

He does not seem to have read the Greek version of the Scriptures which during the last two hundred years had been prepared by learned Jews of Alexandria—the Septuagint—and which became the standard Bible of the Apostles. The native Jews had not yet got over their prejudice against anything foreign; they preferred their own Hebrew tongue.[1] It was an easier transition from the Aramaic, which they spoke, to the Hebrew of their Scriptures, than it was from Aramaic to Greek. And so the Septuagint was not readily received in Palestine; and even Greeks who became converted to Judaism learned the ancient Hebrew for their Bible-reading.[2]

That the Old Testament quotations in

[1] Acts 22, 2. [2] Jos. *Antt.* 20, 3, 4.

the Gospels are mostly from the LXX does not show that Jesus himself quoted that version, but only that the Evangelists used it. They would do so the more readily because they knew Greek well, and wrote their own account of their Lord's life and words in Greek.

The Scribes acknowledged only the Hebrew text, and this text it must necessarily have been that formed the basis of His disputations with them. To the people He rendered Scripture in the dialect of the people and of Himself, the Aramaic.

Therefore we must conclude that even if Jesus did learn any Greek, He could have had but little use for it. And for Latin still less. The current words for measure, farthing, legion, were Latin, and He used them; but no knowledge of the language was necessary for that.

CHAPTER X

RELIGIOUS DUTIES

PRACTICAL religious duties were meanwhile being constantly attended to. The ordinary life of the Jew was full of them. And Jesus was now a Bar Mizveh, and had to observe the Torah like all other members of the congregation.

Every morning and every evening the Shema was said.

The Talmud gives precise directions as to the time.[1] In the morning it was to be some time between daybreak and the third hour (9 A.M.), preferably as soon as one could distinguish blue from white, but Rabbi Eleazar preferred to wait until he could distinguish blue from green. In the evening the limits were the moment when the priests entered the Temple to eat of

[1] Berakhoth, i.

the heave-offering and the end of the first watch. Wherever the Jew happened to be at the time, in the synagogue, in the house, in the street, even at work, he turned towards Jerusalem, bent his head and looked on the ground, and so repeated the Shema, with certain forms of thanksgiving before and after it: before, praising God for His majesty in the heavens, and then for His love to Israel; after, recalling the mighty works done for their forefathers, and, in the evening, praying for national deliverance.

There was, besides, already partially in use a series of benedictions, which were said three times a day—morning, afternoon, and night.[1] Though attributed to Ezra, they were not finally completed until a hundred years after Christ's time, and they contain allusions to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. These in the earlier form (the first three and the last three of the series) and the Shema formed part of the synagogue service, and might be said there.

That there was merit in the frequent

[1] Schurer, p. 372.

repetition of such prayers, appropriate and beautiful though they might be, was an idea against which Jesus, when He became a teacher, found it necessary strongly to protest. He said nothing against the prayers themselves; nay, He used like words Himself, and called God 'our Father,' even as did they.

Similarly, though He condemned those who made broad their phylacteries, and enlarged the borders of their garments to be seen of men, He said not a word against the sincere use of the Tephillins and the Tsitsith. He had, no doubt, the little rolls Himself, to wear sometimes on wrist and forehead, and well He knew by constant repetition the words that they contained, but He did not have the cases conspicuously large.

The blue fringe was at the four corners of His robe,[1] as the Law directed,[2] the sign of Jehovah's covenant with His people, but it was not over-long in affectation of superior piety.

So, too, while He blamed those who made long prayers for a pretence, He

[1] Matt. 9, 20; 14, 36. [2] Num. 15, 37-41; Deut. 22, 12.

did pray long and earnestly and often Himself.

He was brought up to pray. Prayers were spoken before and after every meal, and even during the course of it,[1] on rising in the morning, and on retiring at night. There were special prayers for festival and fast days. Daily, weekly, monthly, yearly observances, in ceremonial rite or in forms of words, filled the life of the Jew. 'Would to God that man prayed all day long,' was the aspiration of Rabbi Johanan; and Paul, the Jew-taught Christian, urged his Thessalonian converts to 'pray without ceasing.'[2]

The synagogue was at this time the usual place of public prayer.

That Jesus frequented its services is clear, not only from the existing custom and law of the people, but from the allusions in the Gospels to His own habit during His ministry.

He began very early. The Jewish mother was recommended to take her children, and might do so as soon as they were five years old; when they were thirteen they were

[1] Matt. 26, 26, 27. [2] 1 Thess. 5, 17.

expected to go, as being now themselves members of the congregation of Israel.

The period of the rise and spread of synagogue worship lies between the Testaments. There is no mention of anything of the kind in the Law or the Prophets. The ceremonial and sacrificial system of Judaism was complete, and did not need to be supplemented. But during the exile, when there was no longer any Temple, meetings for instruction and mutual encouragement were just what was wanted. And in attributing the definite establishment of the synagogue to Ezra, tradition is probably right. It was a stroke of genius.[1] Judaism could not have lived without it. Jerusalem and the sacrifices were lost, the nation seemed destroyed, but the survival of the national religion was secured when the people were got together regularly to listen to the reading and exposition of the Law.

The institution proved so useful that it did not cease to exist when the Temple worship was restored. Rather, it spread the more, and became in turn a medium for the diffusion of Christianity.

[1] Stapfer.

In Jesus' time, wherever there were Jews there was a synagogue. It was called Beth-hakeneseth, or in Aramaic Beth-kenicheta (meeting-house), or Beth-ha-tephila (house of prayer), or Moed-el (house of God).

Ten men were enough to form a minian (number) or representative congregation of Israel.[1] And if one man alone should build a house, and dedicate it to public prayer, it was regarded as a synagogue.[2]

The expense of erection was usually provided for by voluntary contribution.

An elevated and conspicuous site was chosen, and if possible near water, so that purifications might be easily carried out. The one in Nazareth was probably on the rising ground at the back of the village.[3] The words 'Wisdom crieth in the chief place of concourse'[4] were taken as a direction; and Jesus spoke of some whose habit it was 'to pray standing in the synagogue, and in the corners of the streets.' The Lord's house, the Jews thought, should be 'established in the top of the mountains,' and 'exalted above the hills.'[5]

[1] Megil. i. [2] Sanhedrin, i. 6.
[3] Luke 4, 28, 29. [4] Prov. 1, 21. [5] Isa. 2, 2.

They were rectangular, or sometimes round, buildings of stone, quite plain in appearance, except for a portico with a carving of a symbol—in some a seven-branched candlestick, in others a pot of manna—over the entrance. Inside, two rows of columns divided it into three parts. (In the larger synagogues of populous towns there were four rows, and so five aisles.) A wooden partition with gratings in it shut off a part of the room, near the entrance, in which the women stood. Just beyond the middle was a platform (N.T. Bema), and on this a lectern, from which lessons were read and addresses delivered. At the end, behind a veil meant as an imitation of that in the Temple, was a wooden chest, an ark, in which, wrapped in linen cloths, were kept the rolls of the Law (Torah) and other sacred books (Sepharim). Over the ark hung a lamp, always burning, and close by stood an eight-branched candlestick, used during the Feast of Dedication. The only other articles of furniture were the trumpets on which the Chazzan sounded from the roof the entry of the Sabbath Day, the new moon, the feasts, and the new year, and perhaps

any specially liberal act of almsgiving;[1] and the benches. Most of these last were placed in the main part of the building, and the men sat on them facing the bema and the ark. But the 'chief seats,' which were claimed by the 'rulers of the synagogue,' were beyond the bema, and their occupants faced the rest of the congregation. The best seats were paid for. The poor and the proselytes stood near the door, a custom against which James, the brother of the Lord, afterwards protested very warmly when writing to Christian Jews.[2]

To sweeten and perfume the air the floor was strewn with mint.

Services were held on Sabbaths and on festival-days, and also on the second and fifth days of the week—Monday and Thursday—which were market days and Sanhedrin days.

Everybody went. It was a privilege as well as a duty. To be forbidden to come by the three representative rulers was a dire disgrace; it was as bad as excommunication was in the Middle Ages in Western Europe. Civil rights and property were forfeited.

[1] Matt. 6, 2. [2] Jas. 2, 2, 3.

The men went with their phylacteries tied on their forehead and wrist. The women wore white veils, and stood humbly in the appointed place, their children in their arms. All put off their sandals at the door.

The order of service was as follows :—

First came the Shema with its accompanying benedictions, said in the common Aramæan dialect, at the lectern, by a priest if one were present, or otherwise by the leader of devotions (Sheliach zibbur, legate of the congregation), someone deputed for the purpose by the chief ruler of the synagogue. The 'rulers of the synagogue' seem to have been the same persons as the members of the local tribunal; they were elected by the people, and set apart by the laying on of hands.

(Benedictions before the Shema) :—

I. 'Blessed be Thou, O Lord, King of the world, who formest the light and createst the darkness, who makest peace and createst everything; who, in mercy, givest light to the earth and to those who dwell upon it, and in Thy goodness day by day and every day renewest the works of

creation. Blessed be the Lord our God for the glory of His handiwork and for the light-giving lights which He has made for His praise. Selah! Blessed be the Lord our God, who hath formed the lights.'

II. 'With great love hast Thou loved us, O Lord our God, and with much overflowing pity hast Thou pitied us, our Father and our King. For the sake of our fathers who trusted in Thee, and Thou taughtest them the statutes of life, have mercy upon us and teach us. Enlighten our eyes in Thy law; cause our hearts to cleave to Thy commandments; unite our hearts to love and fear Thy name, and we shall not be put to shame, world without end. For Thou art a God who preparest salvation, and us hast Thou chosen from among all nations and tongues, and hast in truth brought us near to Thy great name—Selah—that we may lovingly praise Thee and Thy oneness. Blessed be the Lord, who in love chose His people Israel.'

(The Shema itself):—Deut. 6, 4-9; 11, 13-21; Num. 15, 37-41.

(After the Shema):—

'True it is that Thou art Jehovah our

God and the God of our fathers, our King and the King of our fathers, our Saviour and the Saviour of our fathers, our Creator, the Rock of our salvation, our Help and our Deliverer. Thy name is from everlasting, and there is no God beside Thee. A new song did they that were delivered sing to Thy name by the seashore; together did all praise and own Thee King, and say, Jehovah shall reign world without end! Blessed be the Lord who saveth Israel!'

(At evening prayer):—

'O Lord our God! cause us to lie down in peace, and raise us up again to life, O our King! Spread over us the tabernacle of Thy peace; strengthen us before Thee in Thy good counsel, and deliver us for Thy name's sake. Be Thou for protection round about us; keep far from us the enemy, the pestilence, the sword, famine, and affliction. Keep Satan from before and from behind us, and hide us in the shadow of Thy wings, for Thou art a God who helpest and deliverest us; and Thou, O God, art a gracious and merciful King. Keep Thou our going out and our coming in, for life and for peace, from henceforth and for ever!'

The leader then went up before the ark, and said six eulogies of those eighteen which are known by Ezra's name.

I. 'Blessed be the Lord our God and the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; the great, the mighty, and the terrible God; the most high God, who showeth mercy and kindness, who createth all things, who remembereth the gracious promises to the fathers, and bringeth a Saviour to their children's children, for His own name's sake, in love. O King, Helper, Saviour, and Shield; Blessed art Thou, O Jehovah, the shield of Abraham.'

II. 'Thou, O Lord, art mighty for ever; Thou, who quickenest the dead, art mighty to save. In Thy mercy Thou preservest the living; Thou quickenest the dead; in Thine abundant pity Thou bearest up those who fall, and healest those who are diseased, and loosest those who are bound, and fulfillest Thy faithful word to those who sleep in the dust. Who is like unto Thee, Lord of Strength, and who can be compared unto Thee, who killest and makest alive, and causest salvation to spring forth? And

faithful art Thou to give life unto the dead. Blessed be Thou, Jehovah, who quickenest the dead.'

III. 'Thou art holy, and Thy name is holy, and the holy ones praise Thee every day. Selah! Blessed art Thou, Jehovah God, the holy One.'

XVI. 'Take gracious pleasure, O Jehovah our God, in Thy people Israel, and in their prayers. Accept the burnt-offerings of Israel and their prayers with Thy good pleasure; and may the services of Thy people Israel be ever acceptable unto Thee. And O that our eyes may see it, as Thou turnest in mercy to Zion! Blessed be Thou, O Jehovah, who restorest Thy Shechinah to Zion!'

XVII. 'We praise Thee because Thou art Jehovah our God, and the God of our fathers, for ever and ever. Thou art the rock of our life, the shield of our salvation, from generation to generation. We laud Thee, and declare Thy praise for our lives which are kept within Thine hand, and for our souls which are committed unto Thee, and for Thy wonders which are with us

every day, and Thy wondrous deeds and Thy kindnesses which are at all seasons —evening, morning, and midday. Thou Gracious One, whose compassions never end; Thou Pitying One, whose grace never ceaseth—for ever do we put our trust in Thee. And for all this be Thy name blessed, O our King, and extolled always, for ever and ever! Let all things that have life bless Thee—Selah—and praise Thy name in truth, O God, our salvation and our help. Blessed art Thou, Jehovah, Thy name is the Gracious One to whom praise is due.'

XVIII. 'O our Father, bestow peace, prosperity, Thy blessing and favours, Thy grace and pity upon us, and on all Thy people Israel. Bless us all with the light of Thy countenance, for by this light, Jehovah our God, hast Thou given us an eternal law, the love of right and justice, blessing, mercy, life, and peace. May it seem good in Thine eyes to bless Thy people Israel in all times and in all places, and to grant them Thy peace. Blessed art Thou, Jehovah, who givest peace to Thy people Israel.'[1]

[1] Edersheim.

The priestly benediction followed :—

'The Lord bless thee, and keep thee :

'The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee :

'The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.'

All these prayers were said by the same person—a priest, if one were present, or, otherwise, anyone deputed by the rulers. The people meanwhile remained standing, and said 'Amen' to each prayer.

Then they sat down for the reading of the Law. Readers were called up from the congregation. Three were required on week-days, seven on Sabbaths.

The Chazzan, or officer of the synagogue, took a roll from the ark and handed it to the first reader. Each reader read one section. There were 153 sections (sedarim) in the Torah, and they lasted for three and a half years. The manuscript was of course in Hebrew ; an interpreter (meturgeman) stood by the reader's side and translated what he read, verse for verse, into the Aramaic, which was the dialect of the people.

On week-days the service ended here.

On the Sabbath a passage was read also

from the Prophets (the Haphtarah). There was at this time no fixed course of lessons; the reader selected what he pleased. In the instance which St. Luke mentions, when Jesus went into the synagogue at Nazareth on the Sabbath-day, and stood up to read, 'There was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written,' &c.

Again the interpreter translated.

And then came some comments on the passage, made sitting. Darshan, the speaker was called, and his remarks Derashah. When he was a distinguished Rabbi, he merely whispered his words into the ear of an Amora, who gave a popular rendering of them to the congregation. The Darshan might be the reader himself, or a ruler of the synagogue, or a member of the congregation, or a visitor called up for the purpose. When Paul and his company came to Antioch of Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and sat down, 'after the reading of the Law and the Prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have

any word of exhortation for the people, say on.'[1]

Usually these addresses were doctrinal discussions, consisting largely of quotations from the sayings of eminent Rabbis.

When Jesus acted as Darshan, and uttered His own thoughts with freshness and force, 'the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.'[2]

Except in the liturgical part of the service there was not always silence. If a speaker hesitated in a quotation the hearers would sometimes help him, or correct him in a blunder; and applause or murmurs were not thought indecorous. Expressions of surprise broke out when Jesus spoke so forcibly in the synagogue of His native village;[3] and Paul was opposed and railed upon when reasoning at Corinth.[4]

The address in the synagogue was the origin of the sermon in the Christian Church.

With the address the service closed. A final blessing was said, and the people went their way.

[1] Acts 13, 15.
[2] Matt. 7, 28, 29.
[3] Matt. 13, 54.
[4] Acts 18, 6 (R.V. margin).

Besides the set services on the Sabbath, and on the market and court days, the synagogue was open for private prayer every morning, midday, and evening.

We can imagine how large a part this institution played in the early life of our Lord.

It had been His school in childhood, and the Chazzan had been His teacher; as He grew up it was His library, where were kept the only books He knew; and it was His constant place of prayer. Nay, it was His school still. He would learn about God there, in the praises to which He said 'Amen,' and in the Scriptures that He heard read. And He would learn about man. The religion of His race touched and inspired Him. He felt with them the joy of being Jehovah's chosen people, the dignity of relationship with the great ones of the past, the shame of national sin and ruin, the hope of deliverance and restoration to come. He was an Israelite indeed.

And He saw there, too, some of its less pleasing aspects. Even in the North the proud Pharisee made his long prayers, and gave his ostentatious alms, and sat in the

front seats. Even of these His honest-hearted neighbours there were many who found in the majestic sentences of Holy Writ little else than material for word-splitting arguments, or pegs to hang Rabbinical sayings upon.

The synagogue, established everywhere where there were any Jews, and in numbers where the population was large, became afterwards a medium by which the Gospel was preached, and a model on which Christian worship was formed. Indeed, great as were the real differences of thought and of ultimate custom, it was from the synagogue that the church was developed, and the transition was not violent.

There were other religious observances than those of the ordinary public and private prayer. And Jesus would take part, as became Him, in all. Not that He was a formalist. In the South, where Pharisees abounded, the whole life of the devout Jew was regulated with minutest detail. There was no room for individuality: to think, to feel, to act of oneself was impossible under so strict a *régime*. Those who found such a religion wearisome and did not force

themselves to carry out its rules were all 'sinners.' Said the Pharisees, 'This multitude which knoweth not the Law are accursed.'[1]

But in the North, though there was an equally strong sentiment of loyalty to the national faith, there was a comparative freedom from rigorous formalism. They read the Scriptures, these Galilæans, and prayed in their synagogues, and fasted and gave alms, as good Jews should, and went up to the great festivals at Jerusalem with a simple enthusiasm which the colder if more cultured religionists of Judæa affected to despise.

And so Jesus, though He learned in those earlier years that it became Him to fulfil all righteousness, yet had not His spiritual life crushed by the heavy burdens which the narrower Judaism laid upon the shoulders of its devotees.[2]

What was prescribed by the Law Jesus knew and practised, but not the voluminous directions of Rabbinic tradition as embodied later in the Mishnah. He observed the rules as to purifications,

[1] John 7, 49. [2] Matt. 23, 4.

made in the first instance, no doubt, for the sake of public health in so warm a climate, but by this time regarded as ceremonial duties. He did not eat forbidden foods, and was careful not to spread disease by unnecessary contact with a leper or with a dead body. But it is evident that He looked rather to the original intention of the Law than to the ideas of it current in His time, for we read in the Gospels of His touching a leper to heal him.[1]

According to the 'tradition of the elders,' all meat was 'unclean' which had not paid tithe, and so was any article of food purchased from a Gentile. The Essenes withdrew entirely from ordinary life, in order to be sure of avoiding defilement. The Pharisees exercised a ceaseless vigilance; and if ever it happened to them to touch anything of whose 'cleanness' they were not quite sure, they were restored only by repeated purifications. They had water poured over their wrists and hands when they came in from the market-place, and always before they would eat. In other cases total immersion of the body was

[1] Mark 1, 41.

required. About the different kinds of water, and different manners of washing, there were endless discussions: twelve whole treatises of the Mishnah are occupied with the subject of defilements and purifications. But to Jesus it must have seemed already in His youth, as we know it did in His manhood, that it was the evil things that come out of the heart that defile a man, and not the eating with unwashen hands.[1]

The practice of fasting, though by the Mosaic Law enjoined for one day only in the year—the great Day of Atonement—had before the close of the Old Testament period become generally customary. During the Captivity four fasts were held in the year;[2] others were proclaimed when special circumstances called for them;[3] and individuals sometimes fasted for personal sorrows. On two days of the week—the second and the fifth—fasts might be held. And some strict Pharisees regularly fasted on these days without any particular reason, but merely as a mark of devoutness. There

[1] Matt. 15, 19, 20.
[2] Zech. 7, 1-7; 8, 19.
[3] 1 Sam. 7, 6; 2 Chron. 20, 3; Jer. 36, 6-10, &c.

were different degrees of fasting. To abstinence from food some added a disordered toilet, and some to that again the passing their acquaintances without recognition.

No doubt Jesus fasted when other people did, and perhaps sometimes for Himself alone, as a token of humiliation and an opportunity for prayer. It is clear, from what He said later on, that He knew no merit in making one's face grimy with ashes, and being uncivil to one's friends. 'Thou, when thou fastest,' He said, 'anoint thy head and wash thy face' as at any other time, 'that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father which is in secret.'[1] And He did not teach His disciples, as the Rabbis did theirs, to fast oft.[2]

The giving of alms was an established custom in Nazareth, as elsewhere. A tenth of each third year's produce was given; the grain in the corners of the fields, and sometimes a sheaf, and the gleanings, whether of cornfield, olive-yard, or vineyard, were left; and collections were made of money or of kind at the synagogue services. It was the poor, the stranger, the fatherless, and the

[1] Matt. 6, 16-18. [2] Matt. 9, 14.

widow whose benefit was contemplated. Jesus, no doubt, gave His humble contribution according to His ability. They were poor themselves, the Holy Family, but they were pious Jews and charitable. In His after-life He always thought of the poor, and helped them as best He could, and told others to do so too. The common purse of the disciples, which Judas kept, had something in it for the poor.[1] He advised the rich young man to sell all that he had and to give. He praised the poor widow who cast her two mites into the treasury. He did not disapprove of the tithing even of mint and anise and cummin.[2] He only condemned the ostentation which marred so much of the almsgiving of His day.

The habit of consideration for the poor, learned and practised first in His early home, was one medium through which the divine charity that was in Him reached down to men.

He would take part in the great religious festivals as they came round. In His childhood he had noticed some of the incidents belonging to them, and had

[1] John 12, 5; 13, 29. [2] Matt. 23, 23.

inquired their meaning; now that He was an adult He would have an actual share in them Himself.

That visit to Jerusalem of which St. Luke tells was only the first of many. Regularly each succeeding year would He go up with the other Nazarenes to keep the Passover, and perhaps also to the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles (strict Jews attended them all), and the impressions made upon him by His first visit would be deepened and confirmed.

CHAPTER XI

WORK

THOUGH with the Jews religion was the principal thing, and much time was spent in the prayers and meditations and discussions which it involved, and though their life had none of the anxiety and bustle and strife that mark our Western civilisation, yet there were not many idlers.

Few worked hard; none had nothing to do. Young people were brought up to work. It was a father's duty not only to have his son circumcised and taught the Law, but also to find him a calling. To neglect this was as bad as it would be to make a brigand of him.[1]

It used to be said in Gamaliel's house that study alone was dangerous, but that study and a trade kept away sin.[2]

[1] Tosaphot in Kiddus-chin, 1.

[2] Pirqey Abhoth, ii. 2.

And so it was that, in whatever class of life, every man was conversant with some trade or other. There were differences, of course, as there are with us to-day. There were callings which were avoided as much as possible: no one, for instance, wanted to be an ass-driver, or a camel-driver, or a boatman, if he could be something better, for these occupations were dirty and toilsome. But manual labour as such was not thought to be degrading.

It happens that we know, in the case of some of the great and learned men of the time, what were the trades they followed. The famous Rabbi Hillel was a wood-splitter ('Love handiwork' his teacher Shemaiah had said).[1] So, too, was Aquila. Johanan was a shoemaker; Nanacha a metal-worker or smith; Phineas was a mason before he became high priest; and Paul the Apostle of Christianity was a weaver of tent-cloth.

The most natural trade for a boy to take to is that of his father. In the East this has always been the custom. It is interesting to notice in this connection that the exclamation reported by St. Matthew, 'Is

[1] Pirqey Abhoth, i. 10.

not this the carpenter's son?' is with St. Mark, 'Is not this the carpenter?'[1] So much a matter of course was it for the son to be of the same trade with the father, that the two Evangelists, in telling their story of Jesus' visit to Nazareth, use two different expressions without any thought of inaccuracy.

We deduce, at any rate, from the passage in St. Mark's gospel that Jesus did learn from Joseph the trade of carpenter, and continued it after Joseph's death. And further evidence is found in the universal tradition of the Church. Justin Martyr says, 'He did carpenter's work while He was among men, and made ploughs and yokes.'[2]

Justin was a little more definite than he need have been. Ploughs and yokes would be wanted in an agricultural neighbourhood such as Nazareth, but so would some other things which would have to be made by the same craftsman.

The trade of the 'carpenter' was not, indeed, strictly confined to articles of wood. In the Old Testament the word 'harash' is employed for anyone who uses cutting tools,

[1] Matt. 13, 55; Mark 6, 3. [2] *C. Tryph.* 88.

even on metals or stones. And the Greek word τέκτων, with which St. Mark translates the Hebrew 'harash,' has a wider sphere than joiners' work.

The Hebrew carpenters must have been skilled workmen, for they are described, in Isa. 41, 7, 44, 13, as carving images of the human figure.

The ploughs themselves that Jesus made had iron shares. They were just like those which are used there to-day by the Arab farmers, but more were wanted then than now, for agriculture has become neglected in Palestine.

He would make spades too, or mattocks (most people had something to dig with),[1] and large three-pointed forks, and axe-hafts and goads, and threshing-sledges, and heavy wooden harrows.

For tools He would have, among other things, a rule, a measuring line, a compass, a plane, a saw, and an axe.[2]

Jesus learned His trade from His father, and worked for some years as his helper; and later it is probable that He took his place.

[1] Deut. 23, 13. [2] Isa. 10, 15; 44, 13.

The tradition is that Joseph died when Jesus was in His nineteenth year.[1] There is nothing in the gospels to contradict this. The question, 'Is not this Joseph's son?'[2] does not imply that Joseph was living at the time it was asked, for a son was known by his father's name after, as well as before, the father's death. The form of the question in the other gospel is different: 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not His sisters here with us?'[3] This does seem to imply that Joseph was no longer working in the home nor worshipping in the synagogue at Nazareth, and was beginning to be forgotten by the townsfolk.

Had he been living during Jesus' ministry we should have expected to hear of him during some of these visits to Nazareth, and at the marriage feast of a relative at Cana.

But neither in Galilee nor in the south country does Joseph appear. And so we judge that he did die before, and some years before, Jesus went out from home.

[1] *Hist. Joseph*, 14, 15. [2] Luke 4, 22; Matt. 13, 55.
[3] Mark 6, 3.

This being so, we may suppose that one reason for Jesus staying so long in Nazareth was that He might support Mary, and perhaps others of the family, by His own labour. Other men married, and made homes of their own. Jesus' home was His mother's house, and the world of men whose sorrows claimed His devotion.

CHAPTER XII

THE MAN IN THE HOME

JESUS was a man years before He began His public work. Among Orientals the appearance of youth is early lost, and its garb put off. Before Jesus was out of His teens He was head of the house and bread-winner for the family. And at home He continued to stay.

The seclusion of His early life is one of the most striking facts in His history. It gives force and dignity to His after-work; it suggests a good deal as to His personal character.

Intelligent as a boy above His fellows, and causing amazement even among aged and learned men by His understanding and His answers, His sayings treasured though not understood by His parents, and advancing continually in wisdom and stature and

in favour with God and men, He yet stayed quietly on in the home at Nazareth, and was 'subject unto them.'[1] Thus, by cherishing His aspirations without giving vent to them, by a gradual realisation of His personality and of His mission before being called upon to assert them, by cheerful subjection to religious and parental authority, and by willing discharge of every duty, His character became amiable as well as noble, His powers were matured, controlled, and directed, He was master of Himself. In quietness was His strength. His convictions deepened, His sympathy increased, love of God and interest in men grew warmer within Him; yet He kept silence, waiting the Divine summons to action. His hour was not yet. He was learning now what the great men of His nation had learned in olden time, what He expressed afterwards in that command to His disciples: 'Tarry ye . . . until ye be endued with power from on high.'[2] His heart was as a flower not yet giving forth its fragrance, but opening, maturing, colouring, in the sunshine of the favour of God

[1] Luke 2, 51, 52. [2] Luke 24, 49.

and man. His mind was as a fount not yet flowing forth, but filling drop by drop from a thousand sources.

To us the silence of those years is eloquent. The power of His later works and the authority of His words belong to a more than human sphere, but the humility, submissiveness, diligence, and piety of His early life we may fitly try to copy.

The silence was not idleness. His days were filled with duty. The family, the home, claimed His service; the ways and ideas of the villagers, the beauty and mystery of Nature, the history and hopes of the nation, the occasional tidings from the great world, His thoughts.

'Faithful over a few things,' He was made 'ruler over many things.'[1] The words are His own, and are illustrated by His life. God even in youth, He shows Himself truly man; man, He proves by His very lowliness His deity.

The greatness of His spirit necessarily set Him apart from His fellows. Not even those nearest and dearest could enter into His feelings and hopes: His mother herself,

[1] Matt. 25, 23.

noble and saintly as she was, did not ununderstand Him.

Yet Jesus is portrayed to us in the gospels as the very ideal of friendliness and sociability. His solitariness was certainly not that of cynicism, selfishness, or disappointment. He loved all men, even His enemies: yea, as His disciple testified, He was love.[1] The young men of Nazareth were His brothers, the maidens His sisters.

He was no misogynist. He neither despised nor disliked woman. He was considerate for her needs,[2] compassionate for her sorrows,[3] respectful for her characteristic traits, even when they were not quite reasonable,[4] jealous for her honour,[5] pitiful for her sin.[6] He regarded her as man's helpmeet,[7] not as the enemy of his better self; she too was a human soul, the sister in the family of the heavenly Father. There have always been people to say that they are the pure-hearted men who

[1] 1 John 4, 16.
[2] John 19, 26, 27.
[3] Luke 7, 12-15; Luke 8, 43-48; John 11, 35; John 20, 13-15.
[4] Luke 7, 36-50; John 12, 3-8.
[5] John 8, 7.
[6] Luke 7, 36-50; John 4, 7-26.
[7] Gen. 2, 20.

have nothing to do with women. There was in Jesus' time a well-known Jewish sect, the Essenes, who said so. But He was not one of them. He talked with women simply and about other things than trifles; women were among his most intimate friends.

With His mother His relations, once those of the dependent babe and boy, needing her constant care and patient teaching, had become those of the grown-up son, trusted and true. Now He thought for her.

Whatever may have been His nominal position in the household, it was to Him that His mother turned in any difficulty, of her own or of another's, with perfect confidence in the soundness of His judgment and the kindness of His heart. At the marriage feast in Cana, when she noticed that the wine was failing, she mentioned it to Him, and though He was not willing to do anything prematurely which might be taken as a display of miraculous power, she yet told the servants 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.'[1]

[1] John 2, 3-5.

She felt that she did not fully understand Him, either in His boyhood,[1] or now, or in His public ministry;[2] and some have thought that she regarded Him as mistaken in His aims and methods, and wanted to prevent Him from offending the rulers and endangering His safety,[3] and that she did not join herself to His disciples until after His death.

But trust Him she did, for she loved Him.

And herein is suggested to us our proper attitude towards the God-man. 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!' What is life, and what is death, we know not; nor whence we come and whither we go; nor why we sin and why we suffer. Nor can we define the Christ, or say how and when He saveth us. Yet are we sure that in Him is life; that He is the true light; that God is love. And blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.

[1] Luke 2, 48.
[2] Matt. 12, 46.
[3] Matt. 12, 46; Mark 3, 31; Luke 8, 19.

She trusted Him and loved Him, even while wondering at Him, and treasured up His sayings in her memory.[1] From her it must have been that St. Luke in later years got those details, which he alone of the Evangelists records, of how the angel appeared to her to announce His birth, how Elisabeth her kinswoman blessed her, and she herself broke forth into her glad Magnificat; of the aged Simeon taking the child in his arms and thanking God that now he had seen His salvation; of Anna, the prophetess, speaking of Him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem; and of that eventful visit to the Feast of the Passover when they lost Him, and lo! He was in the Temple, listening to the doctors and asking questions.

With the other members of the family, the simplicity and affectionateness of His disposition would tend to prevent or to modify the jealousies which so often arise where one is more gifted or more cherished than another.

Who exactly these others were that are spoken of as His brethren is a question

[1] Luke 2, 51.

upon which much argument has been lavished. And as might be expected in a matter of minor importance, with scarcely any direct evidence to turn to, the conclusion of each writer has been that which best agreed with his own theological position.

The passages in the New Testament that are most often quoted are the following:—

'(Joseph) took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called His name Jesus.'—Matt. 1, 24, 25.

'And she (Mary) brought forth her first-born son.'—Luke 2, 7.

'After this (the marriage in Cana) He went down to Capernaum, He, and His mother, and His brethren, and His disciples.'—John 2, 12.

'. . . Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? and His brethren James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? . . .'—Matt. 13, 55, 56.

'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?'—Mark 6, 3. Compare Luke 4, 16-30; John 6, 42.

'His mother and His brethren stood without, seeking to speak to Him.'—Matt. 12, 46. See also Mark 3, 20-22, 31-33; Luke 8, 19-21.

'Now the feast of the Jews was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa. . . . For even His brethren did not believe

on Him. . . . But when His brethren were gone up unto the feast, then went He also up.'—John 7, 2-10.

'And many women were there (at the Crucifixion), beholding from afar, which had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.'—Matt. 27, 55, 56; 'Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome.'—Mark 15, 40; compare 15, 47; 16, 1; Luke 24, 10. Compare also John 19, 25-27: '. . . His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. . . .'

'These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.'—Acts 1, 14.

'Have we no right to lead about a wife . . . even as the rest of the Apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?'—1 Cor. 9, 5.

(At Jerusalem) 'James, the Lord's brother.'—Gal. 1, 19.

There were, then, 'brothers' (ἀδελφοί) and 'sisters.'

Four brothers are mentioned by St. Matthew: James, afterwards Bishop of Jerusalem and the author of the epistle; Joseph, called by St. Mark Joses; Simon; and Judas. - Jude -

The 'History of Joseph,' an Arabic book of the fourth century, gives a Justus; and the 'Gospel of James,' the work of a Christian Jew in the second century, a Samuel.

Of the sisters, we meet with the names of Mary and Salome[1]; Esther, Thamar, and Salome[2]; Assia and Lydia.[3]

From a cursory reading of the above passages, one would take it for granted that Jesus being the eldest, born before the marriage, these others were the children, born later, of Joseph and Mary. But this is obnoxious to the sentiment with which, in all ages of the Church's history, large numbers of her members have regarded the mother of their Lord. They have desired to believe, as in her miraculous motherhood, so in her perpetual virginity. Two main theories, sometimes spoken of as traditions, have been advanced:—

I. That they were cousins of Jesus, children of the Virgin's sister mentioned in John 19, 25.

This supposes (*a*) that 'His mother's sister' is the same person as 'Mary the wife of Clopas,' because there is no 'and' between them; (*b*) that the James and Joses in Matt. 27, 56, are the same as those in Matt. 13, 55, and as the James the son of

[1] Epiph. *Adv. Hær.* 28, 7. [2] Sophr. *Fragm.*
[3] *Hist. Joseph*, 2.

Alphæus in Luke 6, 15, 16, and Acts 1, 13, the Judas of this list of Apostles being also a brother, and the writer of the epistle,[1] and that Alphæus is the same name as Clopas; and (*c*) that the word 'brethren' means in this connection merely 'kinsmen.'

This is the view adopted by Hegesippus and Clement of Jerusalem (second century), and by Papias, Jerome,[2] Augustine, and the Latin Church generally, and among modern theologians by Mill, Pearson, Lange, Didon.

Its difficulties are:—(*a*) That James, Joseph, and Jude are common Jewish names, and might well occur in each of two related families, so that there is no need to identify them; while it does look unlikely that two Marys should be sisters. (*b*) That though the word ἀδελφός is used in the New Testament rather vaguely—for disciple, fellow-worker, Christian—yet when it does define a relationship it means 'brother,' and a cousin is called 'cousin,'[3] or 'sister's son'[4]; *i.e.*, that the cousins of our Lord in every passage in which they are mentioned

[1] Jude 1.

[2] Jerome, *Contra Helvidium.*

[3] Col. 4, 10.

[4] Acts 23, 16.

are called 'brethren,' while no other cousins or kinsmen are in any so called. (*c*) That the James and the Jude with whom they are identified were Apostles,[1] but Jesus' brethren did not believe on Him ;[2] that their neighbours associated the 'brethren' and 'sisters' with Joseph and Mary and Jesus ;[3] and in several places they appear along with Mary,[4] no mention being anywhere made of another Mary their mother, though the wife of Clopas was all the time living, for she appears at the Crucifixion.

II. That they were children of Joseph by a former marriage, and so that Mary was their stepmother and Jesus their half-brother.

This theory appears first in the apocryphal Gospel of Peter, Gospel of James, and 'History of Joseph.' Jerome scouted it, but it was adopted by Epiphanius, Hilary, and Ambrose, and became the general belief of the Greek Church.

It fits in, better than the theory of cousinship, with the language of the gos-

[1] Luke 6, 15, 16.
[2] John 7, 5, 10.
[3] Matt. 13, 55, 56.
[4] Matt. 12, 46; Mark 3, 31; Luke 8, 21; John 2, 12; Acts 1, 14.

pels. There is no evidence at all as to its truth.

As against these two theories, Helvidius, in the fourth century, advocated a return to a natural reading of the words in question, and he had many supporters.

They were dubbed Antidicomarianitæ, or 'enemies of Mary,' a name which itself shows what was the real thought in the minds of those who argued against them.

This view relies upon the language of Matthew 1, 25, and Luke 2, 7, on the ordinary meaning of ἀδελφός, and on the general tone of the gospels, in which the 'brethren' constantly appear with Mary, and without any hint that they are not her own children. Jesus, as though head of the family, stays long at home and works, and Mary seems to rely on Him.

Its difficulty is that it conflicts with the idea of the perpetual virginity of the 'Mother of God,' and so can be accepted only by persons whose reverence for Mary and for Jesus would not be diminished by her having been a wife and mother in the ordinary sense of the words.

The matter has been very much

discussed, not only in the earlier but in these later years of Church history; and among commentators and biographers, even within our own Church of England, there is no sort of agreement.

This is not the place to attempt to decide a matter involving details so complicated, and that will be settled, after all, chiefly by our personal prejudices.

Those who wish to read the arguments at greater length will find them stated in :—

Smith's 'Dict. of the Bible': articles on 'Brother,' 'James,' 'Joseph.'

'Pearson on the Creed,' art. iii.

Alford: Comm. Matt. B. 56; Greek Test. iv. 87.

Davidson: 'Intr. N.T.' vol. iii.

Mill: 'Accounts of our Lord's Brethren vindicated.'

Lightfoot: 'Epistle to the Galatians,' Appendix.

Joseph B. Mayor: 'Epistle of James.' Introduction, pp. viii.–xxxvi.

F. W. Farrar: 'Early Days of Christianity,' ch. xix.

For our present purpose it is enough that we know that James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and the rest, whoever they were, were brought up in the home at Nazareth, and lived as members of the family; that to Jesus, at any rate, they were

brothers and sisters. And though the material is scanty for forming an opinion as to what sort of relations existed between Himself and them, we are not without some ground for surmising that these were happy and harmonious. They did not at first sympathise with the aims and methods of His ministry, or believe in His divine commission; but that very fact serves to emphasise the frequent mention of them as His brethren, and their apparent concern for His safety.[1] And knowing what we do of the affectionateness and modesty of His matured character, it is impossible to suppose that in the earlier years there arose, on His part at least, anything to mar the peace and good-will of life in the home at Nazareth.

What cause of difference there was in after years—His assertion of His mission, and His attack upon the prevailing abuses of religion—had not then arisen, and even the consciousness of His call was as yet only growing, and was so tempered with humility as to give no offence to others.

Possibly it was the very simplicity and

[1] Matt. 12, 46; Mark 3, 31; Luke 8, 19.

amiability of His character as a boy, and their intimate knowledge of Him in all the petty details of humble life, that made it so difficult for His brethren to believe on Him as the Messiah. Familiarity bred contempt. The neighbours also were incredulous from a similar cause.[1] And, indeed, the Jews generally thought to see God only in outward demonstrations of miraculous power, rather than in poverty of spirit and mercifulness and purity of heart. Except they should see signs and wonders they would not believe. They are to-day the race—His own—that denies Him. It is a human weakness to think great what is strange. 'A prophet is not without honour save in his own country and in his own house.'

[1] Matt. 13, 54-58; Mark 6, 1-6.

CHAPTER XIII

SOCIETY

THE family at Nazareth, humble as was their station, must have had many friends; for in these Eastern villages everybody knew everybody. Their manners were easy and their intercourse free. Though there were differences in wealth, the differences were not so great as to make wide social distinctions, and there was none of the class feeling which in our Western civilisation shuts off one set from another, and limits our knowledge, and narrows our sympathies.

So Jesus grew up without prejudices. He knew all sorts and conditions of men, and saw that human nature was the same in all. He was ready in after years to feel for the anxieties of the rich as well as for the deprivations of the poor; to take for

His disciples fisherman, customs officer, and physician; to treat with equal graciousness the blind beggar by the wayside and the wealthy tax-gatherer in the city[1]; to bear himself before Roman governor and Jewish tetrarch with quiet dignity.[2]

The life of Jesus shows how the mark of the true gentleman is not the standing aloof from any, but the being just and kind to all.

It was not when He had gone out from the home into the larger world of the south and Jerusalem that His social experience began. Already in the Galilæan village He would see something now and again of strangers from far countries. But it was not this that made His behaviour so easy and courteous under all circumstances. It was partly the wholesome goodness of His nature, and partly also the fact that His interest lay in man himself rather than in his externals, and that from the very first that interest was deep and constant. Man is man wherever he be. Customs, ideas, habits of life, education, vary with different countries and stations; but the underlying passion and nobility, folly and

[1] Luke 18, 35-19, 10. [2] Luke 23, 1-15.

ambition, are always present, and can be noticed in the smallest hamlet as well as in the most populous city.

Observation may be very instructive though you have only a few specimens, but these constantly before your eyes. In the country one's social experience is closer, even if in town it be wider.

And Jesus was essentially sociable. He did not isolate Himself, as did His cousin John. When He was lost, His parents 'sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.' His life all through was lived with others. When He sent His disciples out, it was not separately, but two and two. 'That they may be one' was His prayer for them.[1] Where two or three should be gathered together in His name, there would He be in the midst of them.[2]

This sociability of Jesus was one reason why He 'grew in favour with men.' Another lay in His simplicity. He was Himself what He called Nathaniel, an Israelite indeed, 'in whom is no guile.'[3] He was the 'lamb' of God. Even if wise as a serpent, He was harmless as a dove.

[1] John 17, 22. [2] Matt. 18, 20. [3] John 1, 47.

And also He was good. His conduct was without reproach. Even His enemies, afterwards, and the fierce opponents and critics of His Church, could bring no personal charge against Him.

And yet another reason was that He appreciated and respected and liked people. It is a common fault of young men, especially if they be clever, to underestimate the knowledge and ability of others and to think lightly of character and experience, to look for faults rather than for excellencies, to be critical, irreverent, supercilious. And so they are tolerated as being young yet, but there is not much pleasure in their company. Jesus, on the other hand, was humble, or rather self-forgetful, being genuinely interested in whatever person He was talking with, and showing no sign of haughtiness.

The Christ, with all His keen insight into the human heart, its concealed passions and its mixed motives ('He knew what was in man'), was ever sympathetic in His attitude and kindly in His judgments. Stern towards sin, He was pitiful to the sinner. And He did not look for sin; He

sought rather for the better feelings, to draw out and encourage them.

With prophetic inspiration did Isaiah sing of the Messiah, celebrating at once His modesty and His kindliness :

> He shall not strive, nor cry aloud ;
> Neither shall anyone hear His voice in the streets.
> A bruised reed shall He not break,
> And smoking flax shall He not quench.[1]

In what we moderns would call the 'public' life of Nazareth, Jesus does not seem as yet to have taken any prominent part. In the synagogue He was a worshipper and hearer only, in urban and national affairs an inhabitant and subject. Hence the astonishment of the Nazarenes when (during the first year of His ministry) they saw Him appear as 'darshan,' stand up to read the final lesson, and then sit down and discourse upon it.[2]

In the celebrations of festivals and fasts —the joyous feasts of Dedication, of Purim, of Weeks, and of Tabernacles, and the solemn Passover and Day of Atonement— He was a participant and not a leader. An

[1] Isa. 42 3 ; Matt. 12. 20. [2] Luke 4, 16-22.

observer yet, He was reaping the 'harvest of a quiet eye.'

He worked at His carpenter's bench, and He saw and spoke to His neighbours as they went out to their work, to dig their gardens, or prune the vines and olive-trees, or sow corn-seed in the field-patches lower down the hill. He watched the oxen ploughing in the plains, and turned to note the beasts of burden—asses, mules, or camels—laden with merchandise passing slowly through the village street on their way to the sea.

His mother and other women came out to carry water from the well, or to buy food; they ground corn in their little mills, and baked cakes, and did the work of the house, and spun wool from the fleece and wove it up into garments.

And the family met again indoors at meal-times and for prayers.

His observations took yet a wider range. He saw not only the humble homes and simple habits of His own friends, but also the palaces where princes dwelt, and the purple and fine linen of the great. Prisoners; beggars sitting by the wayside or haunting the doors of the rich; stewards, faithful or

selfishly crafty; merchants keen on good investments; absentee landowners; employers of labour; Roman soldiers, rough but dutiful; sick folk, demoniacs and paralytics; tax-gatherers, hated of all; learned Scribes, proud and saintly Pharisees—He seems in the gospels somehow to be familiar with the ways and the thoughts of them all.

From the records of His later life we gather that then, at any rate, and therefore earlier, He was a man with whom all sorts of people entered at once and freely into conversation. Within the compass of two chapters, for example, we read of his being spoken to by a leper, a centurion, a Scribe, some disciples of John, a ruler, and two blind men.[1]

It would be a quiet life, but not a dull one. Ennui arises more from disposition than from circumstances. There may be as much happiness in a lowly position as in an exalted one, in a hamlet as in a metropolis. There is no dearth of interest anywhere if only we be interested. And Jesus was interested in everybody and everything. And though His position was

[1] Matt. 8 and 9.

humble, that did not imply—as it too often does in our Western towns—squalor and coarseness and pauperism. Wants were few, the climate genial, and the land fertile; the neighbours all lived plainly, and He had His trade. In the towns where the Roman officials lived there were examples of brutish self-indulgence and lavish expenditure; Nazareth was as yet uncorrupted.

The dress of the villagers was simple, and their general appearance plain, though picturesque. The man's wardrobe consisted of but three articles. The white sudar or turban, tied to the chin with a cord and falling on to the shoulders, was his head-gear, and he wore it everywhere, even in the synagogue. The tunic (χιτών, chalouk) was like a long shirt of linen, reaching to the knees or to the ankles, and with rather short sleeves. Some tunics were seamless; they were common among foreigners from the West. Jesus had one,[1] though perhaps not yet; it may have been given to Him by one of those who 'ministered to Him of their substance.'[2] Many men possessed two or even more tunics.

[1] John 19, 23. [2] Luke 8, 3.

Jesus, during His ministry, and His disciples had apparently only the one they wore.[1] A person wearing the tunic only was spoken of as naked;[2] though usually nothing else was worn indoors.

The outer garment, called cloak (ἱμάτιον, talith), was a large piece of woollen cloth, in shape like a Scotchman's plaid, wrapped loosely over the shoulders, and held in by a girdle at the waist. It was often white with broad stripes of colour. The one that Jesus had could not have been all white, for in the account of the Transfiguration it is said, as something to be noticed, that 'His garments became white.' Red was worn by soldiers only. Blue was a not uncommon colour at that time; but perhaps white with brown or other stripes was, as it is now, first favourite.

At the four corners of the cloak were the tassels (κράσπεδα, tsitsith), of sacred import.[3]

The girdle was either of linen, like Jeremiah's,[4] or of leather, like John the Baptist's.[5]

[1] Matt. 10, 10; Mark 6, 9; Luke 9, 3.
[2] John 21, 7.
[3] Luke 8, 44.
[4] Jer. 13, 1.
[5] Matt. 3, 4.

It was only the wealthier class who had shoes. Jesus and His neighbours wore sandals, with wooden soles and leather straps.

The dress of the women was very similar. A white cotton kerchief covered the head and shoulders; but in their case it was tied on by a strip of brighter colour edged with silver coins. Their tunic was larger than the men's. If the Nazareth girls then were like those you see there now, it was not very smart in appearance, being without any definite shape or colour, and not always in the best repair.

Their cloak also, which was not worn always, was made very full. When it was drawn in by the girdle, a great fold hung loose, large enough to hold grain.[1] Ruth carried six measures of barley in hers.[2]

There was not among men or women in Nazareth any great attention to toilet. They never cut their hair; it hung down in curls upon their shoulders. 'His locks are bushy' is part of the description of one who is 'altogether lovely.'[3] The men let their beards grow long and untrimmed.

[1] Luke 6, 38.
[2] Ruth 3, 15.
[3] Song of Songs, 5, 11 (R.V. marg. 'curling').

In the matter of cleanliness the Jews had as a race not a high reputation among the Romans.[1] We know, however, that their religion had a good deal to say about washings; and that they did bathe in Jordan and other rivers,[2] and in their own houses;[3] and that they had a sort of soap.[4] The Arab peasant of to-day is dirty. Perhaps the Jew of Jesus' time was so too, not only in the slums of Rome, but in those country districts which had no streams at hand. In the larger towns there were public baths, and private ones in the houses of some of the wealthier citizens.

The language spoken was that called Aramaic or Syro-Chaldean. It was to Hebrew what modern is to classical Greek, or Italian to Latin. Their books were in the old language, their common speech was in the new. We have seen already how in the synagogue the lessons were read from the Hebrew manuscripts, and paraphrased by the reader verse by verse into the tongue of the people. The theological discussions of the Rabbis were still held in Hebrew, but

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 5.
[2] 2 Kings 5, 12.
[3] 2 Sam. 11, 2.
[4] Jer. 2, 22; Mal. 3, 2.

that was in the schools and in the Temple, not in the villages of Galilee.

There are plenty of Aramaic words among the Greek of the gospels to show that this was the language which was being spoken :—

Abba, Gabbatha, Golgotha, Ephatha, Corban, Mammon, Messiah, Pascha, Raca, Satan, Talitha koumi, Eloi eloi lama sabacthani, Cephas, Martha, Tabitha, Barjona, Bartimæus, Bartholomew, Barabbas.

The use of Aramaic was common to the whole of the country. But the people of Galilee did not speak it exactly as did the Jews of the south. There is no evidence to support the statement so commonly made that the Galilæans were despised on this account, but there is some evidence as to the fact that they could be distinguished by their pronunciation. They confounded the sounds of the letters ain and aleph, beth and caph, cheth and he, and ludicrous stories are told in the Babylonian Talmud of their mistakes. Peter might deny with an oath that he knew not Jesus, but his speech betrayed that he was a Galilæan.[1]

[1] Matt. 26, 73.

And the devout Jews from every nation under heaven, gathered for the Feast of Pentecost, when they marvelled that they heard the disciples speaking in foreign tongues, yet knew they were Galilæans.[1]

As to Galilæan and Judæan speech, see Lightfoot, 'Horæ H. et T.', Gandell's edition, vol. i., ch. 87 ; Deutsch, 'Remains,' pp. 357, 358 ; Merrill, 'Galilee,' pp. 106–8.

[1] Acts 2, 7.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PROVINCE

It was a magnificent view that caught the eye as one got out of the town and on to the top of the hill behind.

'Watcher' or 'watched' was probably the meaning of 'Nazareth'; its hill was seen from far, and commanded a wide prospect of land and sea.

A land 'full with the blessing of Jehovah' was Galilee.[1] Its air was always bright and fresh. It was well watered, 'a land of water-brooks,' and well wooded, 'the unparalleled garden of God.'

'It is throughout rich in soil and pasturage, producing every variety of tree, and inviting by its productiveness even those who have the least inclination for agriculture; it is everywhere tilled, no part allowed

[1] Deut. 33, 23.

to be idle, and everywhere productive.'[1] And the natural fertility of the soil was then, as it is not now, developed by careful cultivation. Crops paid better on this rich land than sheep or goats.[2] In the open fields the plough was used, in no slovenly fashion.[3] They were sometimes so subdivided into small holdings that only the spade was suitable, and the digging was well done.[4]

So the valleys and gentle slopes were crowded with vineyards, olive-groves, fruit-orchards, cornfields, and many even of the mountains with forests.

The bay-tree, the myrtle, the almond, the pomegranate, the citron flourished; the fir, and pine, and sycamore; the cedar, cypress, and balsam; the palm, the terebinth, the walnut, and the oak. And also there was a large variety of wild flowers springing up in profusion: the red anemone, the pink phlox, the convolvulus, marigolds, geraniums, mignonette, white and pink cyclamen, and rock roses, lit up the bare patches of the limestone hills.

[1] Jos. *Wars*, 3, 2.
[2] Talmud, quoted by Hausrath, 1, 8.
[3] Luke 9, 62.
[4] Luke 16, 3.

Looking southward, then, over the town, with its flat roofs and terraced gardens, Jesus would see an expanse of rich and well-cultivated country, its bright green verdure varied only by the deeper hues of trees and fruit-orchards, and by patches of golden grain. Far away, closing in the plain of Esdraelon, were on the right the wooded heights of the Carmel range and the hills of Samaria; then Mount Gilboa, behind which in the distance could just be discerned the mountains of Gilead; and then Little Hermon, and the wooded Tabor, with its fortress, 'a city on a hill,' close to on the left. The hill-country east of Nazareth was known for its heavy dews, which accounted, no doubt, for the richness of the vegetation.

Just beyond these eastern hills, some twelve or fifteen miles away, out of sight from here, lay the famous Sea of Galilee, the centre of northern Jewish life and activity.

One portion of its western shore, where the mountains recede inland, the plain of Gennesareth, a patch of only two and a half miles by one, was remarkable even in Galilee

for its beauty and fertility. Its trees were in leaf all the year round. It yielded the finest wheat in the land. Scented rushes that were much thought of grew here.[1] The fruit-gatherers lodged in bowers of branches, or 'tents of Gennesareth.' 'Such is the fertility of the soil,' says Josephus,[2] 'that it rejects no plant, and accordingly all are here cultivated by the husbandman, for so genial is the air that it suits every variety. The walnut, which delights beyond other trees in a wintry climate, grows here luxuriantly, together with the palm-tree, which is nourished by heat; and near to these are figs and olives, to which a milder atmosphere has been assigned. . . . It not only possesses the extraordinary virtue of nourishing fruits of opposite climes, but also maintains a continual supply of them. Thus it produces those most royal of all, the grape and the fig, during ten months, without intermission, while the other varieties ripen the year round.'

The lake itself was famed for its choice and abundant fish. So plentiful was the supply that only the best kinds were kept;

[1] Strabo. [2] Jos. *Wars*, iii. 3, 2, 3.

the rest that were in the nets were thrown away.[1] The fishing was free. Every city on the shore was the home of hundreds of fishermen. At Tarichæa fish were packed and sent away even as far as to the great cities of the West.

There were passenger and traffic ships also. Some were of considerable size, for Josephus, in describing a sea-fight here, has the phrase 'climbing up into their ships.' Merchants crossed from Tiberias on the west coast to Hippos on the east. 'The surface of the lake was dotted with white sails of vessels flying before the mountain gusts, as the beach sparkled with the houses and palaces, the synagogues and temples of the Jewish or Roman inhabitants.'[2]

For on its shores were nine 'cities,' and large villages besides, whose names meet us constantly in the later life of our Lord. Just about this time, while He was still at home, a new and magnificent city was being built by Herod Antipas, to be his own capital and to be called Tiberias.

Up to now the principal city in the province had been Sepphoris, a fortified place,

[1] Matt. 13, 48. [2] Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 367.

with an upper and a lower town, 'the security of all Galilee,' which stood on a solitary height, only four miles north from Nazareth.

To the east of Sepphoris, on the northern slope of the upland plain of El Battauf, was the village of Cana, where some of Mary's friends were living.

Beyond lay the highlands of Galilee, hills rising behind hills for sixty miles or more, back to the white peaks of Hermon, 10,000 feet above sea-level.

The snow-ice of Hermon added another beauty to the colouring of the landscape, and freshened, even at this distance, to the fancy the warm summer air. It was known afar; it was sold in the Phœnician cities on the coast, and in Damascus, where wealthy merchants lived; and no doubt the ruler of the province, Herod Antipas, had bowls of it at the banquets which he gave in his palace at Tiberias.

It was beneath Hermon's 'eternal tent of snow,' amid most magnificent scenery, that the royal city of Cæsarea Philippi stood, the seat of Herod Philip, Antipas' brother, with its royal castles and palaces, its grotto sacred to Pan, and the marble

temple which the tetrarch's father, Herod the Great, had built. Jesus and His disciples in the time to come were to spend in this locality hours of intense spiritual exaltation.[1]

Turning now to the north-west, there lay before the eye a fertile plain, varied with gentler hills, and studded with towns. Prominent among these was Zabulon, the largest city of the north, and of great beauty, its storeyed houses rising high like those of Tyre and Sidon.[2]

And the plain ended with the sandy shore of what we now call the Bay of Acre. Accho, or Ptolemais, at its northern end, where Belus emptied itself, was not visible. The blue waters of the Mediterranean stretched away into the distance, flecked with white sails of ships. There at the southern extremity of the bay, by the mouth of Kishon, were the houses of Haifa, and towering above them the bluff promontory of Carmel.

Like a great wall the mountain stood, reaching S.S.E. for over twelve miles, clothed with thick foliage of shrubs and

[1] Matt. 16, 13-20; 17, 1-8. [2] Jos. *Wars*, ii. 18, 9.

trees. Beyond it lay the plain of Sharon and the sea. On this side Kishon wound along its base, coming across the wide plain of Jezreel from the foot of Tabor.

What patriotic thoughts and feelings must have stirred the soul of Jesus, well instructed as He was in the history of His people, when He stood and saw where Barak had led down the Israelitish fighting men from Tabor into the plain, to attack the host of Canaanite oppressors, lured to encamp over there by Megiddo, and Kishon, swollen by rains into an impassable morass, had entangled and swept away the foe!

There, where the river runs close to the mountain,[1] was it that the priests of Baal were hurried down that precipitous ravine to their doom, when on the plateau above, in answer to Elijah's prayer, the fire from heaven had fallen on his sacrifice, that men might know that Jehovah was God.[2]

And across on the eastern side of the plain, on that rocky mound, had stood the royal city Jezreel, into which Elijah ran before Ahab's chariot, while the sky grew

[1] Van de Velde, 1, 324. [2] 1 Kings 18.

black with clouds, the rain-clouds that were the sign of God's mercy vouchsafed to His erring people at the prophet's intercession.

As He gazed on these historic sites, and His mind wandered through scenes in the national drama of sin and suffering, of repentance and relief, did He, we wonder, realise how soon He too would be agonising in prayer, and yielding up Himself a sacrifice for a larger Israel, to bring them back to the Father?

But the country was not of historical and antiquarian interest only. It was at this very time teeming with life; its towns were many and flourishing, its people enterprising and earnest.

Josephus, who was military governor of Galilee, said that it contained 204 cities and villages, the smallest of which had over 15,000 inhabitants. Doubt has been thrown upon this estimate; but it must be remembered that Josephus was a capable man, and in a position to know, and that the statement occurs in a letter written to rivals of his, sent to supersede him, who also knew the country. The numbers got together for various emergencies of war, the evident

abundance of towns in the surrounding districts of Northern Syria, Phœnicia and Peræa, and Decapolis, and the closeness with which people were packed, as illustrated, *e.g.*, by the two and a half millions present for a Passover at Jerusalem, all incline us to believe that the population of Galilee has not been much exaggerated.[1]

The population of Nazareth itself could not have been less than 10,000,[2] and in view of the above statement of Josephus may be put at 15,000 or 20,000. It is spoken of in the gospels, not as κώμη, or hamlet, but as πόλις, or city.

Jews generally, in whatever part of the world, were a fairly well-to-do class; and these countrymen of Jesus were, on the whole, in prosperous, or at least comfortable, circumstances. The numerous and flourishing towns, some of them finely built, indicate a by no means poverty-stricken condition of the people. The province yielded a large sum in tithes, and paid, on occasion, very heavy tribute to Roman governors. It was only in Judæa and Jerusalem that

[1] For fuller arguments see Merrill's *Galilee*, pp. 62–67.
[2] Keim, 1, 318.

the saints had to be helped by their brethren of the Dispersion.[1]

A great income was derived from the cultivation of the olive. 'Let him dip his foot in oil,' Moses had foretold of Asher.[2] Gischala was a well-known centre of the oil industry, yet it was but one of many. John of Gischala made an enormous fortune in Josephus's time by acquiring a monopoly of the local trade; he was actually able to sell oil at Cæsarea at ten times the cost price. At Jotapata there was such a store that, when the city was besieged by the Romans, the people drove back the storming party by pouring boiling oil upon them.

So fine were the olives of Bethshean that the Rabbis spoke of it as the gate of Paradise. Syrians, Phœnicians, even the peoples of Asia Minor, got their oil from Galilee.

Centuries back, Solomon had paid to Hiram of Tyre 200,000 gallons of oil a year, and as much wine, and immense quantities also of wheat and barley.[3]

The wide plain that lay spread out before

[1] Acts 11, 29; Rom. 15, 26.
[2] Deut. 33, 24.
[3] 1 Kings 5, 11; 2 Chron. 2, 10.

Nazareth on the south produced heavy crops of wheat, and so too did the one on the north, in which Sepphoris stood. Grain was stored in the towns of Upper Galilee, to be paid as tribute, when due, to the Emperor of Rome. Arabah, a few hours north of Nazareth, was one of the principal corn markets.

Flax also was grown, and the women wove from it fine linen fabrics.

Two towns quite close to Nazareth, Sichin and Kefr Chananyah, were busily engaged in the manufacture of pottery, such as oil-jars and water-vessels. There were beds of a dark-coloured clay in that neighbourhood, out of which a hard and black ware was made.

Of the fisheries which were so profitable we have already spoken.

Another reason which would account for the prosperity of Galilee was its geographical position. Through it or near it passed the trade-routes between the great East and the greater West. An ever-present market for all it could produce, whether flax, timber, pottery, corn, wine, or oil, was close at hand in the manufacturing and commercial cities

of Phœnicia. They were thickly populated with glass blowers, dyers, and weavers, sailors, and shipbuilders, and their own needs were large; but also they did the carrying-trade of the world, their ships went everywhere, and so they would require even more for export than for home use.

Syria, too, bought largely of the necessaries of life from Galilee.

And much business was done at the stations on the great trade-routes. The rich fabrics and the spices of farther Asia could not well pass on to Egypt and to Rome without leaving something of their value by the way.

The road from Damascus through Cæsarea Philippi to Tyre and Sidon lay perhaps too far north (some forty or fifty miles) for Jesus to see much of it as yet.

But another principal highway between East and West was that from Damascus to Ptolemais or Akka, called by the prophet 'the way of the sea,'[1] and this, passing through Capernaum, Tiberias, and Nain, crossed the plain of El Battauf just behind Nazareth, only five miles to the north.

[1] Isa. 9, 1.

And the road from Damascus to Cæsarea-on-the-Sea and Gaza—*i.e.*, from Syria to Egypt—wound round the near side of Mount Tabor, and crossed the plain of Jezreel in full view from Nazareth, and about six miles away.

Lastly, passing through Nazareth was a Roman road, which ran due north and south, and linked the cities of Phœnicia and the Syrian province with Samaria and Jerusalem.

So, then, Jesus and His fellow-townsmen were by no means isolated from the larger world. Their talks with travellers and business transactions with merchants, or their own journeys to Sepphoris or Ptolemais, to Tiberias, Capernaum, or Damascus, kept them in touch with the centres of commerce, and told them the news of the day.

The 'world' of their time was the Roman Empire, and they were in a representative and important part of it.

In some of the cities round there was a marked foreign element. Scythopolis (Bethshean) in the Jordan valley was largely a Syrian settlement; Gadara and Hippos on the lake were instances near by

of what were now not uncommon in Palestine — Hellenic cities with senates and magistrates of their own. The Herods, for the very purpose of strengthening their position as against the Jews, built towns with quasi-independent constitutions and inhabited chiefly by Gentiles. Such were Sebaste (Samaria), Cæsarea on the coast, Gaba near the plain of Jezreel, Cæsarea Philippi, Bethsaida Julias, and Tiberias. Their religious worship was mostly of Greek deities, with an admixture of Syrian. The first Herod, though a Jew, built temples to Augustus the Emperor at Sebaste and Cæsarea, placed a golden eagle—the Roman ensign—over the gate of the Temple at Jerusalem, held games in honour of Augustus every four years, and generally endeavoured to infect the people with Western manners and ideas.

There were, of course, numbers of Roman soldiers and officials in Jesus' time, both at Tiberias (where Antipas lived) and at other centres. Nay, there would be some passing through Nazareth itself on their way between Phœnicia and the south.

The words used in business were largely

Greek. The coins current were either Greek or Roman, *e.g.*, the assarion, lepton, drachma, denarius, dupondius, talanton.

The supply of Jewish produce, as to kind and as to quantity, was regulated by the Greek demand. Many articles hitherto unknown to them were introduced in the course of trade, from foreign parts.

'Galilee of the Gentiles,' Isaiah had called the country, and the people a 'people that walked in darkness' and who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death;[1] and the Evangelist, in telling how Jesus began His work, quotes the Prophet's words.[2]

Indeed, it has commonly been supposed that they had to suffer some affectation of contempt on the part of the Jews of Judæa, on the ground that they had become corrupted by their contact with heathenism. 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' said Nathanael.[3] 'Art thou also of Galilee?' asked Scribes and Pharisees of Nicodemus; 'Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.'[4] Jesus was not the only teacher who met with prejudice

[1] Isa. 9, 1, 2.
[2] Matt. 4, 15, 16.
[3] John 1, 46.
[4] John 7, 52.

and opposition on that account. 'Galilæan'[1] was a significant term with the southerners: it indicated criticism of the northern pronunciation, although their own was none so pure, and scorn of minds that were not occupied with the same quibbles as themselves. 'Galilæan! fool!' was the taunt flung at the learned Rabbi José by a Judæan woman.[2]

But the evidence of contempt is not quite conclusive, and by some recent writers[3] its existence is denied. If there was such a feeling, it was at any rate not deserved. The social ideas, the secular habits, the workday occupations and business enterprises of the Galilæans, were no doubt largely influenced, and even changed, by their dealings and intercourse with Gentile nations. Their patriotism and religion (the two were one) only stood out more marked by the contrast. The advance of Western manners and ideas set all Israel more than ever on its guard against contagion. The subtle influence of the Hellenic culture and spirit of inquiry was as yet affecting only the

[1] Luke 22, 59; Acts 2, 7.
[2] Erub. 53, b.
[3] *E.g.* Merrill, *Galilee* chap. xvii.

Dispersion, and that but slightly. They were Jews: foreigners were free to settle in their land, and some of themselves might be found settled, and doing well, in every city of the known world; but, at home or abroad, they were Jews still.

They were perhaps not so completely prejudiced against outsiders as were the Judæans. Jesus, who talked with the Samaritan, and granted a Canaanite's prayer, and healed a Roman's servant, and was sought after by Greeks, would have been an unnatural son of Judæa; and so would that disciple of His, a fisherman from Capernaum, to whom, and thereby to the world, God showed that he 'should not call any man common or unclean.'[1] But they none the less believed in their own Jehovah, and in themselves as His people, and in Moses as their teacher. They studied well the Law; they worshipped devoutly in the synagogues; they strongly maintained the sanctity of marriage (indeed, their ideas on this subject were more refined than those of the Judæans); they would have nothing to do with images and statues, and

[1] Acts 10, 28.

in certain details of practical religion were more strict than the people of the south.

It was said of them, and by Rabbis, that they cared for honour, and the Judæans cared for money.

The chief point of divergence, however, was this, that while the Judæans followed tradition, and busied themselves with the subtleties of the Halakhah, the Galilæans were zealous for the Law itself. 'Ye leave the commandment of God,' said the Nazarene to the Pharisees and Scribes from Jerusalem, 'and hold fast the tradition of men.'[1]

The Sermon on the Mount, with its freshness and vitality, and its enunciation of great principles, found some to listen to it in the country where it was spoken. Judæa would have produced at that time neither hearers nor preacher of it.

Galilee was too flourishing and too busy to become the home of the religious abstraction and bigotry of Rabbinism: that suited better the barren bleak hills and decayed cities of the south.

There were Scribes learned in the Law

[1] Mark 7, 8.

teaching at Capernaum and Magdala and Tarichæa and Sepphoris, and even at Nazareth; the priests and Levites fulfilled their functions at Jerusalem. Yet to Jerusalem, which Israel's God had chosen, did every Jew's thoughts turn, wherever in the world his home might be. At the festival seasons, thousands of them flocked through Nazareth in large companies along the great south road. And one of the twenty-four 'courses' of priests, whose duty it was by turns to minister in the Temple, had Nazareth for its centre, and met there to proceed together at the appointed time to the Holy City.[1]

They are said to have been a people of quick and passionate feeling, with some poetical imagination and intellectual activity, and also with a desire for novelty. Perhaps their excitability may have assisted the spread of that strange disease that they called 'possession,' cases of which meet us so frequently in the gospel story.

They were earnest patriots, but their patriotism was not as a rule associated with rebellion. There was a turbulent faction,

[1] Neubauer, p. 190.

the Zealots, who had given trouble at times. As outlaws in the caves the first Herod had dispersed them, and while Jesus was an infant a revolt had been led by Judas the Galilæan. Indeed, Jesus' brother Simon belonged to the party before he became a disciple.

But as a whole they were a law-abiding people. The Herods, though not good men, were shrewd enough or fortunate enough to win and keep their favour. The Galilæans had declared their satisfaction when Herod their tetrarch became, in B.C. 37, king of the whole Jewish country. They threw no difficulties in the way of the judicious government of Antipas, and he held the tetrarchy forty-three years. They had a certain spirit of fidelity to their leaders, as Josephus was able afterwards, from personal experience, to testify.

They could be warlike enough when the occasion arose. 'Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field.'[1] The province was crowded with famous battle-fields, where the forces of Canaan,

[1] Judges 5, 18.

and Midian, and Moab had been put to flight.

And in the not far distant future they would be foremost to oppose Vespasian's legionaries, and, beaten again and again, would still battle on, careless of suffering, defending desperately one fortress after another, until within the walls of their beloved Zion they should perish, crushed by the invincible might of Rome, but with hearts unconquered still.

At present all was quiet. Judæa indeed was restless, under the tyranny of the Roman governors, but Galilee was blessed with peace.

CHAPTER XV

INFLUENCES

What we have been considering has been the outward circumstances of the childhood and youth of our Lord, in order that we may be the better able to understand the development of His character, and to appreciate the significance of His words and life as Teacher and Saviour of men.

For externals do have some effect in the moulding even of the strongest nature as it grows from infancy toward maturity. And they are the material on which the mind of the genius, the soul of the prophet, work. When we know how and amid what surroundings Jesus spent His early years, we know better what He meant when He went forth to preach the kingdom of heaven. Externals do not tell us much; it is a low-lived career that can be adequately

described in terms of outward events; yet that is nearly all the description that is possible, even for the noblest men. It is not given to eyes to see, and pens to set down, the whole thoughts and motives and hopes and affections of a human soul. And who shall do it for a divine one? Externals are not much, but they are what we have, and they are something.

In the character of Jesus there is a well-balanced harmony of the outward and the inward life. He was Jewish in the brooding thoughtfulness which took Him apart from men, even from the nearest and most loved, up to the lonely hills, to pray; He was Galilæan in His readiness to see and hear all that came in His way. His was the impressibility of the north, and of His own youthfulness. Eyes had He, and He saw; ears had He, and heard.

The home-life was the earliest and the most powerful element in His environment. For it was a Hebrew home, where parent's passionate love of child was answered with deep respect of child for parent. The refinement, tenderness, and devout spirituality of His mother, the simple modesty of

Joseph and his conscientious discharge of duty, the companionship of brothers and sisters, the first lessons in religious truth, and the example of pious observances, would tend, we may venture to think, to develop His trustfulness, obedience, reverence, and love.

The lessons at school, the learning to know the Scriptures, the services of the synagogue, the visits to festivals, would draw out intelligence, patriotism, and faith, and exercise Him in habits of worship. His mother's domestic duties, His own working with His hands, and perhaps the necessities of the household, the everyday converse with neighbours who all had something to do, the industrious habits of Jews generally, and specially of the people of Galilee, would help to make Him practical and reliable, to give simplicity to His bearing, and reality to His teaching of religion.

His residence in beautiful and varied scenery, and amid country pursuits, would contribute to His own knowledge of Nature and of God, and to His capacity for teaching His fellow-men with freshness and effect.

All that He saw about Him spoke to Him of the power and wisdom, the justness and mercy of God. He felt that Nature, and not man alone, was a sphere in which the divine purpose was being carried out, and the divine character revealed.

The many-sided life of Galilee—commercial, agricultural, manufacturing, military, legal—would be a means of acquaintance with the thoughts and habits of different sorts of people. In His after-life He appears always at His ease, whoever it may be that He meets ; His divine intuition penetrates at once their character and the story of their life. 'He knew what was in man.'[1]

The ideas of the different religious parties came under His notice, and His heart vibrated in sympathetic response to what in them rang of truth.

Like the Pharisees, He felt deeply the duty of complete obedience in everything to the will of God, and He used in His teaching their conception of a spiritual world peopled with angels good and bad.[x]

Their slavish fear and scrupulosity, their

[1] John 2, 25.

[x] But He did not get it from them! No knowledge of the spiritual world came from man!

dictatorial claims, their desire to seem to be holy, were repugnant to Him.

It has been suggested that His brother James was a follower of Shammai, the founder of the less philosophic but more intensely national of the two rival schools, and might have had some influence upon Himself.

Rabbis were sometimes heard in the towns of Galilee, but the people were not so much taken up as were those of the south with their utterances. Jerusalem was the ring for their dialectic contests. And the difference between the popular Rabbinism and the thoughts of Jesus as shown in His public teaching was deep and wide; it was a difference of principle. The former stood upon close attention to details of ritual observance. Jesus' starting-point was rather the older Hebraism of Moses and the Prophets, the knowledge and love and service of God.

He would hear a great deal also about the political aspects of Judaism. The questions which were afterwards put to Him He seemed to have already thought over and settled for Himself.

He was as proud of His nation as was His brother Simon, for Jehovah had chosen them to bear His name; and as ready to die in their behalf. But His ambition for them was not that they might win back by arms the temporal power, but that by repentance and faith they might enter into the kingdom of heaven. His kingdom was not of this world.[1]

Nor was he unacquainted with that small sect of extreme puritans—the Essenes—who lived as monks at Engaddi, on the western shore of the Dead Sea. There may have been some of the secular brothers of the order living in His own neighbourhood.

Like them, He said that the kingdom of God was for the poor,[2] that it was hard for a rich man to enter it,[3] that God and Mammon cannot both be served,[4] that it were better not to be anxious about such things as food and clothing;[5] and He advised a man once to sell all he had and give it to the poor.[6]

Like them, He preferred simple lan-

[1] John 18, 36.
[2] Luke 6, 20.
[3] Matt. 19, 23.
[4] Matt. 6, 24.
[5] Matt. 6, 31.
[6] Luke 18, 22.

guage: 'Swear not. . . . Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay.'[1]

He and His disciples lived, as did they, with great simplicity; they had a common purse; they carried nothing superfluous with them.

The personal habits of James His brother were, in his later days, when bishop of Jerusalem, similar to those of the Essenes. 'He drank not wine, or strong drink, nor did he eat animal food; a razor came not upon his head; he did not anoint himself with oil; he did not use the bath. He alone might go into the holy place, for he wore no woollen clothes, but linen.'[2] But James was not an Essene, nor was John his kinsman.

Except for small matters of habit and some coincidences of language, Jesus had little in common with the sect. Their leading idea, that of the spiritual efficacy of external purification, He condemned. Nor did He share in their superstition and mysticism. And to Him it seemed foolish to put the lamp under the bushel, as they did by their withdrawal from society.

[1] Matt. 5, 34-38. [2] Hegesippus, in Euseb. ii. 23.

The Hebrew Scriptures, the only literature He had, were His constant study. Their great principles of worship and right doing, the feeling, in them shadowed forth, of Jehovah for His people Israel, and the persistent trend of law and history and prophecy toward some fuller revelation of His mercy, engaged and formed His mind. They were, indeed, a sort of outward expression of His own nature and mission. And it may be that the written Word served in some measure to reveal to Himself the Eternal and Divine Word.

Not that any estimate of surroundings can account for Jesus.

He was what He was, not because He was Mary's babe, and Jewish boy, and carpenter in Nazareth, but because He was Son of God. The religion of Christ rests neither upon Hebrew Scriptures, nor Judaistic theology, nor Roman conquest, nor Grecian commerce, but upon His own personality.

'The world could only give Him what He would freely take.' His observation was a 'dialogue between the within and the without.'[1]

[1] Keim.

Yet it is certain from all we know of Him that He was, more than most men, open to impression. If His was the noblest power of will, His too was the most delicate sensibility. Soul was united with intelligence, heavenward aspiration with delight in the material world, love of God with love of man.

Strong and independent in His convictions, He was meek and lowly of heart; unique, but most human.

Yet how little, after all, can we know. Who shall venture even to imagine, much less describe, the history of the mind and heart of Jesus, even on its human side? The growth of the inward life; His thoughts towards man; His thoughts towards God; His knowledge of Himself; the speaking of the Father to Him—in such things as these silence is our part.

'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.[1]

[1] John 3, 8.

And so the years passed on, until John came preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, saying, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.'[1]

Pharisee, Sadducee, tax-gatherer, soldier, the hearts of all were touched by his appeal to the secret longing—crusted over, perhaps, with formalism or worldliness or greed or sin, but smouldering still in them all—the longing that the 'hope of Israel,' the 'root of Jesse,' might at length really come.

He travelled northward up the Jordan valley proclaiming his message, and baptizing the multitudes who flocked to him out of every city and village. And when he reached Bethany, or Bethabarah,[2] a well-known ford only twenty miles from Nazareth,[3] then Jesus, seeing, perhaps, that this baptism was of God, and because it became Him 'to fulfil all righteousness,' went down there; and, though John protested, 'I have

[1] Matt. 3, 1, 2, 11. [2] John 1, 28. [3] Conder.

need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?' was baptized; and, as He came up from the water praying (perhaps 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done'), the Spirit of God descended as a dove upon Him, and a voice out of the heavens said: '*This* is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

The silence of the years past was broken: the waiting-time was over.

Now at least, now at last, He knew who He was, and what He had to do.

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